PROTECTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES in 2025 budget

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CANADA NEEDS TO MOVE much closer to Europe and Mexico

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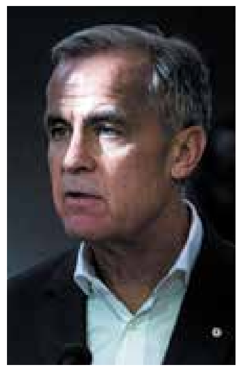

INNOVATION POLICY BRIEFING

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Exclusive news: inside

THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR, NO. 2267 — CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER — MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025 $5.00

Exclusive opinion: inside

NEWS

Most ministers still trying to navigate how to 'keep their jobs' in Carney's cabinet

Most ministers in Mark Carney's cabinet, pictured after being sworn in on May 13, 2025, are still trying to grasp the prime minister's leadership style and priorities, with most treading carefully to secure their place in the new prime minister's front bench, say current and former senior Liberals. *The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia*

Ottawa lobbyists say ministerial staffers aren't returning their calls, but Liberal sources say it's because ministers and their political aides are still trying to find their footing and determine how to survive in the new prime minister's cabinet. But the sources say if lobbyists want meetings right now, they should be focused on the economy and the Canada-U.S. trade war.

BY ABBAS RANA

Five months after Mark Carney won the last federal election and formed government, lobbyists, and industry stakeholders say ministerial staffers are not returning their calls, but veteran Liberals say that's because cabinet ministers are still trying to figure out how to keep their positions under the new prime

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NEWS

Conservative Party faces conflict-of-interest allegation over hiring of Alberta national councillor Feldbusch's husband as regional organizer

BY ABBAS RANA

The Conservative Party is facing conflict of interest allegations after hiring Mark Feldbusch—the husband of Alberta national councillor Heather Feldbusch—as a regional party organizer in the same province where his wife is expected to seek re-election in January 2026 for the party's powerful governing body.

The national council is the highest elected governing council in the Conservative Party, and oversees all governance issues. Heather Feldbusch, currently in her second term as national councillor, is expected to seek a third term at the party's Jan. 29-31, 2026, convention in Calgary. The party is in the process of electing delegates who will in turn elect national councillors at the upcoming convention. These delegates will also hold a review of Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's (Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta.) leadership, and vote on party policy resolutions.

Each riding is permitted to send up to 12 delegates to the convention. Of these, 10 are elected and the other two are either an incumbent MP or candidate of record, and the electoral district association president.

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NEWS

AI study and Senate bills on alcohol warnings and sickle cell disease framework on Senate Social Affairs Committee's agenda

BY TESSIE SANCI

Senator Patrick Brazeau is continuing a years-long quest to educate Canadians about the harmful impacts of alcohol as he marks more than five years of sobriety.

Senator Patrick Brazeau

The non-affiliated Senator, who represents Repentigny, Que., is attempting for the second time to have a law passed that would add warning labels on alcoholic beverages connecting those drinks to the development of seven fatal cancers. Bill S-202, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning label on alcoholic beverages), is currently being studied by the Senate Social Affairs Committee.

Senator Gigi Osler

"Obviously, I did have personal problems with alcohol myself, and so once I stopped drinking, I sort of did a little bit of my own research with respect to alcohol," Brazeau told *The Hill Times* about the genesis of his legislative efforts. "I found myself to be in the 75-per-cent category of Canadians who were not aware about the causal link between alcohol consumption

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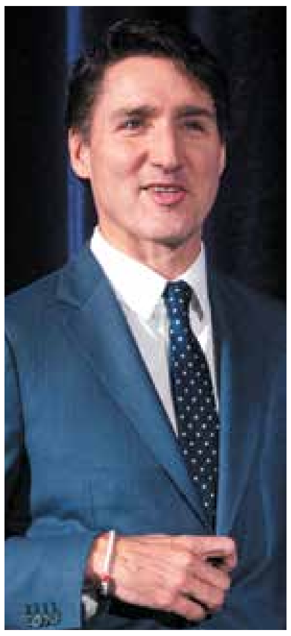
Heard on the Hill

By Christina Leadlay

Trudeau/Katy Perry romance attracts global media attention



Photos of former prime minister Justin Trudeau, left, kissing American singer Katy Perry, right, atop her yacht filled global news feeds last week following a scoop from the U.K.'s *Daily Mail*, centre. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade, screenshot courtesy of Facebook, and photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.*

Photos of former prime minister **Justin Trudeau** kissing American singer **Katy Perry** atop her yacht—and presumably liking it—filled news feeds last week, as did a "cryptic" video by Trudeau's former spouse **Sophie Grégoire Trudeau**. And the attention was global.

The United Kingdom's *Daily Mail* broke the story on Oct. 11 with the headline "Eye-popping pictures that prove Katy Perry and Justin Trudeau ARE a couple: Passionate kisses. Roaming hands. After **Orlando Bloom** split, friends tell us exactly what's going on...."

"Katy Perry and Justin Trudeau enjoyed a PDA-filled day on her yacht, the pair were seen kissing and holding each other close three months after they dined together in Montreal," posted E! News on X on Oct. 12.

Rumours of a Trudeau-Perry relationship first began in July when they were spotted dining together in Montreal. A few days later, he was seen at her concert in the same city.

"Matched by mediocrity: Katy Perry and Justin Trudeau were made for each other," was the Oct. 13 headline in the U.K.'s *Telegraph*.

American broadcaster CBS News posted a video of Perry taken at her Oct. 13 concert in London, U.K., where "a fan held up a sign asking her to marry him. 'You really should've asked me about 48 hours ago,' she responded, prompting loud reactions from the crowd. The comment came two days after Perry and Trudeau were photographed together on a yacht off the coast of Santa Barbara, California."

The hosts of ABC morning show *The View* were supportive: "I think it's great for her. He's sexy," said **Sunny Hostin** in an Oct. 13 broadcast.

"I totally agree," replied **Alyssa Farah Griffin**, recounting having met Trudeau in 2019 when she was working for then-U.S. vice president **Mike Pence**.

"Six [foot] two, the bluest eyes, and then he starts speaking French, and I'm like 'focus on the trade deal.' He is very handsome."

Sophie Grégoire Trudeau mused on love's permanence on Instagram on Oct. 14. *Screenshot courtesy of Instagram*

The next day, Trudeau's ex-wife posted a minute-long Instragram video about love. "Do you find that sometimes you forget that nothing we love was ever meant to be kept?" she asks viewers.

"Love was never about possession. … Maybe love's deepest teaching is this: to stand open-hearted in the face of impermanence, to honour what has been, and to trust that letting go is also a form of keeping inside us where no loss can erase it."

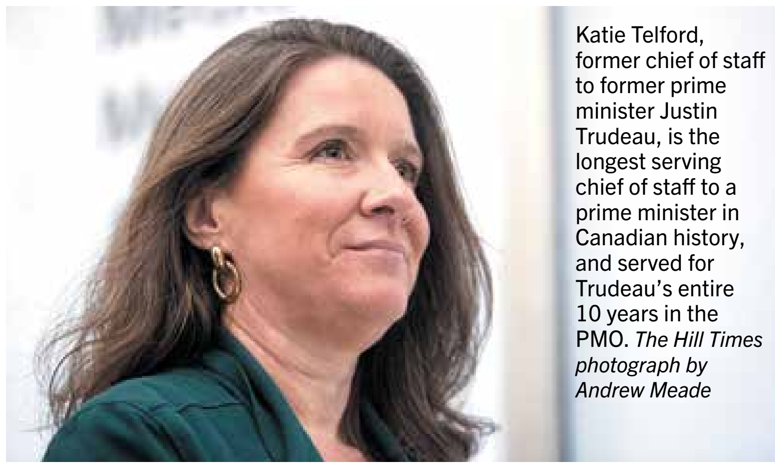
"Katy Perry and Justin Trudeau's yacht PDA romance sparks subtle response from estranged wife Sophie," Page Six posted on X on Oct. 14.

" 'Nothing we love was ever meant to be kept,' Sophie Grégoire Trudeau posts cryptic video about 'love' after Justin Trudeau-Katy Perry photos emerge," was a *Toronto Star*'s headline on Oct. 14, noting "Grégoire did not mention her ex-husband by name or make references to her marriage in the video."

Page Six called Grégoire Trudeau's post a "subtle response," while in a separate but related story quoted "a Canadian society source" saying the new romance "It's a bit of a midlife crisis."

"One person who worked closely with Justin in politics joked to me, 'Who better than Katy Perry to understand what it feels to have peaked in the mid-2010s?' said the society source."

Former PMO chief of staff Telford featured in new book *The Right Hand*



Katie Telford, former chief of staff to former prime minister Justin Trudeau, is the longest serving chief of staff to a prime minister in Canadian history, and served for Trudeau's entire 10 years in the PMO. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

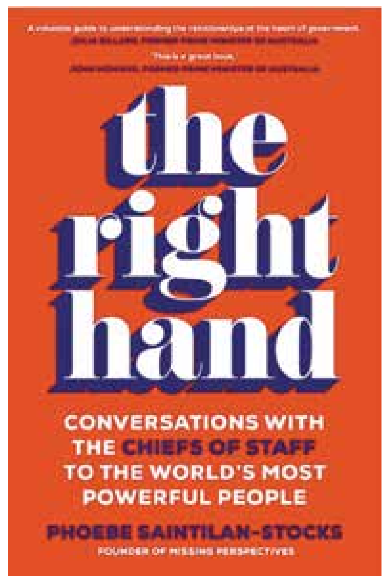
Speaking of former prime minister **Justin Trudeau**, his longtime former chief of staff **Katie Telford** is in a forthcoming book *The Right Hand: Conversations With the Chiefs of Staff to the World's Most Powerful People*, featuring interviews with chiefs of staff from around the world.

To be published by Penguin Random House Australia on Nov. 4, *The Right Hand* is the first book by **Phoebe Saintilan-Stocks**, a former policy adviser to Australia's prime minister.

"I first had the idea for my book, *The Right Hand*, after having the privilege of getting to know Katie—who has been by Trudeau's side from the very, very beginning. The way she spoke about her boss was fascinating to me and made me think about how unique the relationship was," Saintilan-Stocks posted on Instagram on Oct. 14.

Saintilan-Stocks asked all her interviewees what it's like being chief of staff to one of the most powerful people in the world, and do they ever get to switch off?

The author said her book "finally shines a light on people like Katie: the extraordinary individuals working quietly behind some of the most powerful figures in the world. The ones who steady the ship in a storm, are fiercely loyal, make the impossible calls, and rarely, if ever, step into the spotlight."



Phoebe Saintilan-Stocks' book, *The Right Hand*, will be published by Penguin Random House on Nov. 4. *Cover image courtesy of Penguin Random House*

Chief of defence staff says women's role in the military not negotiable

Canada's chief of defence staff says having women in the Armed Forces is not up for debate.

General **Jennie Carignan**, the first woman head of a military force in the Five Eyes allied countries who replaced **Wayne Eyre** in July 2024, dispelled any concerns that Canada's Armed Forces would be following the current American administration's re-thinking of the role of women and other minority groups in the military.

"I want it to be clear that here, in Canada, there is no debate [about women in the military," the Quebec-born and Canada's top military official said in an interview in French with *La Presse* on Oct. 14.

Chief of Defence Staff General Jennie Carignan, pictured on Oct. 31, 2024. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

"For me, there is no controversy. None at all."

Speaking with *La Presse* at the Saint-Jean garrison in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Que., Carignan dismissed the notion that women in the Armed Forces hinder its efficacy, calling diversity "incontestable."

"[Diversity] reinforces our operational capacities. Because—rightly so—we will look for talent among 100 per cent of the Canadian population."

Continued on page 35

NEWS

Federal procurement watchdog finds risk of 'bait and switch' in government contracts

The procurement ombud's latest report on the 'bait-and-switch' practice notes that the tactic is being 'effectively eliminated' due to the changes made by the federal government.

BY IREM KOCA

Procurement Ombud Alexander Jeglic's latest report found multiple instances where suppliers swapped out contractors to work on federal bids. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

There were multiple instances where government contracts were awarded to suppliers who never did the job they were hired to do, and Canada may not have received the best value for money, according to the federal procurement watchdog's new report on the deceptive "bait-and-switch" practice.

"Bait and switch" is when where suppliers propose highly qualified individuals—often referred to in procurement as resources—to win a government contract, but after the contract is awarded, replace those promised resources with less-qualified people.

Whether or not these suppliers actually engaged in bait and switch, or committed procurement fraud is not something his office can determine, Procurement Ombud Alexander Jeglic said, explaining such a finding would require an assessment of intent of the suppliers, which is outside of his mandate.

The Office of the Procurement Ombud (OPO) launched a review into the practice in September 2024 following a request from the House Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, which has been studying procurement misconduct.

In his Oct. 16 report, Jeglic found contracts may not have been awarded to the supplier that offered best value for money in 41 per cent of the cases reviewed.

"That's already quite a telling statistic," Jeglic told *The Hill Times* in an interview.

The OPO selected 24 procurements for review overall, but only looked at procurement and contracting files for 17 of those. The remaining seven files only had solicitation documents reviewed.

The report found that in six of the 17 files reviewed, the original people listed in the bid did not perform any work on the contract. In three cases, some of the original resources performed work while others did not. Meanwhile, in eight of the 17 files, all original resources performed work on the contract.

Replacing resources is a common and valid practice in professional services contracts when proper processes are followed. However, it becomes an issue when a supplier uses the swap as a tactic to make its bid more attractive, and then gets paid for top talent while providing less-qualified personnel, which can affect contract performance. The Competition Act prohibits engaging in bait-and-switch selling.

The review looked at professional services contracts issued between May 13, 2022, and Oct. 31, 2024, by six departments: Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the Department of National Defence (DND), Shared Services Canada (SSC), and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). These departments were selected based on the value and volume of their procurement activities to acquire professional services.

Out of the overall 24 files reviewed, three were from ESDC, nine were from GAC, DND and SSC had five files each, and IRCC had two. All of the chosen files were part of a competitive process, and had at least two or more bidders. Seventeen files involved a full review of contracting files, and seven covered solicitation documents only.

In nine files where the originally proposed personnel performed the work or their replacements were evaluated as having "met or exceeded" the original resource's qualifications, there was no impact to the government's selection of the best value supplier. In one file, the terms of the contract only required

Conservative MP Kelly McCauley chairs the House Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, which studied the bait-and-switch practice as part of its ArriveCan investigation last fall. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

replacement resources to have "similar" experience and qualifications to the originally proposed resources.

However, in seven files, replacement resources were not evaluated as having experience or qualifications that either met or exceeded those of the original resources despite being required to per the contract.

The report found several files where replacement personnel didn't meet or exceed the required experience or qualifications listed in the original bid. This raises concerns about fairness of the procurement process, and whether Canada received best value for its money, the report explained.

Bait-and-switch tactics can be considered a violation of procurement rules or fraud, especially if the supplier never intended to use the resources they originally proposed, noted the ombud's report.

Jeglic said that the new study "lifted the hood" on the issue of replacement of resources, and discovered that it was less prevalent across departments compared to what was found in the ArriveCan study.

Jeglic's January 2024 report on ArriveCan showed that in 76 per cent of the contracts reviewed, either no or some work was performed by suppliers who were pitched as resources to secure the nearly \$60-million ArriveCan contract.

"That was shockingly high … It shows that there was something unique happening within ArriveCan," Jeglic said.

But the recent report had positive findings, too, according to Jeglic.

While he found issues with supplier involvement in setting contracting criteria in the ArriveCan study, that was not the case with procurements subject to the review.

In the one instance where the OPO found that a supplier helped design selection criteria for a contract, there were significant conflict-of-interest safeguards preventing them from participating in any subsequent process, and that was "very well managed," according to Jeglic.

Jeglic also noted as a positive that all the contractual mechanisms or clauses necessary to prevent bait-and-switch activities already exist, and they simply need to be enforced.

In all 17 full-contract files reviewed, mandatory resource criteria were clear, consistent with the requirement, and not overly restrictive, according to the report. However, in three files, the criteria did not assess resources against the minimum qualifications.

The controls available for preventing bait-and-switch tactics are not always used by the departments, according to the report, but in cases where they were, the government secured a qualified supplier and the replacement of the proposed worked did not affect the selection of the best-value supplier.

Jeglic made four recommendations to improve departmental practices: ensuring departments always verify that replacements either meet or exceed the qualifications of the original resource, strengthening contract oversight, clarifying PSPC's guidance on the new Master Level User Arrangement (MLUA) rules, and monitoring how new criteria affects smaller and diverse vendors.

Under the March 2024 MLUA, departments no longer evaluate bids based on individuals who'll do the work, but rather focus on the supplier's corporate capacity and past performance.

The OPO—which has an arm's-length relationship with PSPC, reporting directly to the minister—will do follow-up reviews in two years to see if departments implemented those recommendations.

Jeglic: new criteria may hurt small businesses

The ombud said the whole practice of bait and switch is "effectively eliminated" due to the MLUA changes.

Jeglic noted in his report that this "abrupt shift" to a focus on corporate capacity in task-based requirements may have "unintended consequences," and new criteria may create a barrier to small and medium-sized businesses, Indigenous, and diverse suppliers.

PSPC pushed back on this finding, calling it "speculative" and "out of scope," and that it didn't support the OPO including these paragraphs in the report.

PSPC is the central purchaser for the federal government, managing approximately \$37-billion every year on behalf of departments and agencies. Over the last couple of years, the department has faced increased criticism due to a series of contracting controversies, political scrutiny, committee showdowns, scathing watchdog reports, a historic admonishment of a contractor, and multiple RCMP investigations.

In 2023-24, Ottawa spent a record \$20.7-billion on outsourcing, and reports show that IT contractors cost at least 22 per cent more than inhouse staff. Critics have repeatedly said that outsourcing professional services leads to higher costs in government projects, reduced transparency, and a loss of institutional knowledge within the public service.

If the government is no longer awarding a score to a supplier's bid for the experience and qualifications of proposed resources, there is no longer an incentive for the supplier to "bait" the government, according to the report. However, Jeglic noted it's unclear why the government did not choose to impose existing measures instead.

"Our preference would have been to see the department leverage those mechanisms before altering the supplier qualification framework," Jeglic said.

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The Hill Times

ADVERTISEMENT

Unlocking Canada's Future: First Nations as Economic Partners

Ernie Daniels, President and CEO, First Nations Finance Authority

It's time to correct a common misconception: granting First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA) the ability to finance Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) is not about giving First Nations a competitive edge—it's about leveling the playing field.

Under the current framework, municipalities and other public entities routinely use SPVs to finance infrastructure and economic development. First Nations, however, are constrained by outdated provisions of the Indian Act, which limit their ability to participate in these same opportunities. FNFA's capacity to finance SPVs simply allows First Nations to access the same tools others already use. This is not preferential treatment, it's parity.

More broadly, this issue underscores the critical role of the First Nations Fiscal Management Act (FNFMA) institutions. These institutions—FNFA, the First Nations Tax Commission, the First Nations Infrastructure Institute, and the First Nations Financial Management Board—are not only pillars of Indigenous fiscal empowerment, but also models of good governance, accountability, and economic development. Their success benefits all Canadians by fostering stronger, self-sustaining communities and reducing reliance on federal transfers.

Ironically, these institutions exist precisely because of the limitations imposed by the *Indian Act*. They were created to fill the gaps, to offer First Nations the tools to build their own futures. Supporting their evolution—including enabling FNFA to finance SPVs—is not just a policy decision, it's a commitment to reconciliation, equity, and shared prosperity.

Let's move past the notion of advantage and focus on fairness. Empowering First Nations through the FNFMA is a win for everyone.

Canada's economy and resource potential stands at a crossroads: Indigenous communities are prepared to be part of nation building and contribute towards economic progress, but governments continue to struggle to meaningfully (and legally) consult and engage Indigenous rights holders on decisions that impact their territories.

Since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples shared the land, our traditional knowledge, and developed robust trade networks that made survival possible for new settlers.

Today, our people remain burdened and oppressed by the Indian Act legislation, paternalistic Ottawa, and various legislative impediments to otherwise wanted and much needed economic progress. Indigenous Peoples do not simply want to be "consulted", we want to contribute to the development of projects to build Canada, and at the same time, contribute to increased productivity and real GDP growth.

FNFA created by federal legislation, the FNFMA, 2005, allows the participation of member Nations in economic projects. Over the past 20 years, FNFA has delivered more than $4 billion in financing, raised through capital markets, for First Nations projects—supporting the creation of an estimated $8.35 billion in national economic output, created an estimated 38,500 jobs, and helped to build critical infrastructure like housing, schools, and water systems. From the Haisla Nation's $1.4 billion majority stake in Cedar LNG, to the Mi'kmaq Coalition's $700 million investment in Clearwater Seafoods, First Nations are actively leading and partnering in Canada's energy and resource economy on a global stage.

Yet despite our success, our legislative act still prohibits us from providing financing to Nations who wish to come together to support major projects through SPVs—legal partnerships which First Nations can use to pool resources for major projects—even when federal or provincial guarantees are in place.

Private companies, Crown Corporations and banks face no such restrictions, leaving Canada's First Nations, who are members of FNFA, shut out of opportunities to access affordable capital at preferred rates from an Indigenous-led financial organization. The very reason we were created.

According to Chief Derek Epp Ch'íyáqtel (formerly Tzeachten First Nation), "The Stonlasec8 deal is a prime example of an Indigenous-owned SPV, comprising 38 First Nations in British Columbia who are investing $736 million for a 12.5 per cent equity stake in the project. If FNFA was the lender of choice in that deal, we could have obtained more affordable financing, and those funds could have been reinvested into our communities."

If Prime Minister Carney and Finance Minister Champagne truly want to get our economy moving, they need to ensure First Nations are part of more projects. Concrete and immediate actions are necessary to empower First Nations to invest in and become full partners in projects.

First Nations across Canada already realize the strategic benefits of entering into SPVs when exploring innovative solutions to economic opportunities. Not only can they secure lower rates of financing for projects, but they can also de-risk their investments by working together.

Earlier this month, at a conference on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Chief Kelly LaRocca shared, "SPVs are de-risked, tariff-proof funding – spreading out the risks and minimizing delays of a project."

What is standing in the way of FNFA lending to SPVs is an outdated legislative barrier that should be amended as part of Minister Champagne's November 4th Budget. This will be a genuine test and opportunity for the Prime Minister to demonstrate his government's commitment to the participation of Indigenous Peoples in economic projects.

Across all federal political parties, there is support that amending the legislation would enable FNFA to finance Indigenous-owned SPVs, and that this amended legislation would be a practical, non-partisan step towards economic Reconciliation.

If private lenders can finance SPVs, often at a higher rate than FNFA, why should FNFA be prohibited from doing the same?

Making such a move costs nothing and in fact saves the government money in the short and long term and carries no risk to FNFA's borrowing pool. It levels the playing field within the broader Canadian economy. It opens the door for multi-Nation ownership in major projects, creating lasting economic benefits for First Nations communities across Canada.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has doubled the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program, and these tools compliment his priorities and his understanding of what is at stake. Without SPVs, these commitments remain half-measures. With SPVs, they become real and financially impactful.

The Prime Minister should ensure that the *Budget Implementation Act*, which accompanies the federal budget, amends the FNFMA to allow FNFA to finance SPVs, thereby unlocking billions in investment, creating thousands of jobs, and ensuring profits flow into housing, water, and health services.

This proposal to unleash Indigenous capital and investments is a high-impact, low-cost plan, rooted in true partnerships between the Canadian Government and Indigenous Rights and Title Holders. This is an Indigenous-led solution resulting in meaningful Reconciliation, for the benefit of all Canadians, and the time is now.

FNFA

NEWS

Anand's trip to India and China part of 'diplomatic reset' as Canada pursues new trading partners

Former Liberal MP John McKay described both countries as 'difficult markets to crack' as Canada seeks new friends on the global stage in the quest to become less economically reliant on the United States.

BY MARLO GLASS

Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand's trips to India and China this week are an attempt at thawing chilled relationships between Canada and two global superpowers, marking a significant shift from Prime Minister Mark Carney's predecessor, but former seasoned government backbencher John McKay says he's "ultra-cautious" about China, and hopes the "lessons" of India's interference and alleged criminal activity aren't soon forgotten.

McKay, who was a Liberal MP from 1997-2025, said he applauded Anand's (Oakville East, Ont.) efforts to re-engage with China and India, describing both countries as "difficult markets to crack" as Canada seeks new friends on the global stage in its efforts to become less economically reliant on the United States.

"And that's a good thing" said McKay, who chaired House committees on defence, public safety and national security during his nearly two decades on Parliament Hill.

But he said he hopes the accusations of India's alleged criminal activity won't be forgotten.

"Extraterritorial killings, or extrajudicial killings, are a serious breach of Canada's sovereignty," said McKay, as well as "serious breaches of any possibility of a relationship built on trust and mutual benefit."

In 2023, then-prime minister Justin Trudeau accused the Indian government of playing a role in the assassination of a Sikh activist in Vancouver earlier that year, with RCMP accusing India of widespread criminality in Canada. The accusations led to both countries expelling each other's diplomats, and a chill in bilateral relations.

China, too, has been accused of election interference and has more recently slapped steep tariffs on Canadian agriculture products including canola, soybeans, and pork, seemingly in retaliation for Canada's tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles.

An inquiry was called in September 2023 to investigate allegations of interference by China, Russia, India and other foreign actors state actors, and while it found no evidence that parliamentarians had conspired with foreign states, it nevertheless concluded disinformation poses an "existential threat" to Canada's democracy.

When Canada's relations with India soured, Canada was much more aligned on economic and security co-operation with the U.S., and "now we can't," McKay said. "Two years ago, we didn't have to put up with the existential threat of [U.S. President] Donald Trump."

Canada-India joint statement 'a big step forward'

Vina Nadjibulla, vice-president of the Asia Pacific Foundation (APF), said it's "absolutely critical" for Canada to diversify its trade partnerships amid an unpredictable relationship with the United States.

"The big change since the Trudeau era is that we're seeing India collaborate and engage constructively," said Nadjibulla.

Looking now to a new era of co-operation between Canada and India, "there will still be other shocks," Nadjibulla said. "But it's relevant to have channels of discussion, building trust among law enforcement, and seeing this as something that is in the interest of both countries."

Carney's (Nepean, Ont.) olive branch for rebuilding relations with India came with inviting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the G7 summit in Kananaskis, Alta., earlier this summer. That type of collaboration needs to continue in order for the relationship between the countries to repair, Nadjibulla said.

Earlier this week, Anand met with Modi, the first time a Canadian minister visited India in two years, since relations between the two countries soured. An ensuing statement said they discussed building on the momentum from Modi and Carney's meeting earlier in the summer.

Anand's office also released a joint statement on Oct. 13 with her Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, laying out a roadmap for the future of the partnership between the two countries. That includes collaboration on trade, climate change, renewable energy capacity, emission reduction, environmental management, disaster resilience, and more.

The two foreign affairs ministers said their meeting was a "follow-up to the guidance" provided by Carney and Modi during their summer rendezvous, "to take calibrated measures to restore stability in the relationship and to pursue a constructive and balanced partnership grounded in respect for each other's concerns and sensitivities, strong people-to-people ties, and growing economic complementarities," the joint statement read.

Anand and Jaishankar said they "recognize that in the context of ongoing global economic uncertainty and rising geopolitical tensions, a strong and resilient Canada-India bilateral relationship is essential."

Nadjibulla called the joint statement "a big step forward" as it was "ambitious, comprehensive, and also focuses on specific issues Canada and India can work on together," including artificial intelligence, a top priority for Carney's government.

Canadian national security and intelligence officials were recently in India, with Anand saying it was "to ensure we have that law enforcement dialogue proceeding" as diplomatic relations resume.

Nadjibulla noted a recent poll from the Angus Reid Institute and APF that showed more than 50 per cent of respondents support a "diplomatic reset" between India and Canada, in light of the "economic upheaval" caused by U.S. tariffs.

'More cautious' approach needed with China

Wang Di, China's ambassador to Canada, painted a positive picture of Canada-China relations in a recent op-ed for *The Hill Times*, saying "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."

Wang said the two country's 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 strengthened 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."

Earlier this week, Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand, pictured, met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi where they discussed building on the momentum from Modi's meeting with Prime Minister Mark Carney earlier in the summer, according to a statement. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

But McKay said he would advise the Carney government to proceed with caution when it comes to Canada's future with China.

McKay said India is "closer to a peer nation" than China, the latter of which he said takes part in espionage, spying, manipulation, cyber threats and on-the-ground and kinetic threats, "much more realistically," he said. "I don't think there is an equivalency between India and China. China is a far more significant threat."

Nadjibulla, similarly, said while there are also efforts to "recalibrate" Canada's relations with China, the approach is one that is "a bit more cautious," she said, with officials preparing for a possible visit between Carney and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit at the end of October.

Canada's former ambassador to China says the country might become something of a flashpoint between Canada and the U.S., as the two continue trade talks and eye the future of the Canada-U.S.-Mexico free trade agreement.

"How ready is [Carney] to have a Canadian policy on China that is somewhat different than the U.S.?" said Guy Saint-Jacques, who noted Carney didn't score any "brownie points" with Trump for following the U.S. in putting tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles.

High-level trade talks continue between Canadian and American officials this week, and at the same time, Trump is trying to negotiate the U.S.'s own trade deal with China, Saint-Jacques said. Canada could become collateral damage if China opts to buy from some American sectors where Canada is a direct competitor, he said. Trump acknowledged Canada and the U.S. compete in the auto manufacturing sector during Carney's recent trip to Washington, D.C.

"Prime Minister Carney could tell Donald Trump, 'While you are negotiating with the Chinese, we are also negotiating,'" Saint-Jacques said. "So it will be very interesting to see where all this will lead, but … this represents a very clear attempt on the part of the prime minister to try to renew dialogue with two very important countries in Asia."

The commission into foreign interference showed Ottawa won't tolerate Beijing meddling on Canadian soil, he said, but at the same time, Canada could also pursue "better trade relationships" with China, particularly as Carney launches his Major Projects Office and eyes "nation-building" projects tapping into this country's natural resources.

"We know we want to develop our own mines, we will need a lot of investment," Saint-Jacques said. "And I would argue that we could welcome Chinese investment, but we are making the rules."

Carney 'better perceived' by Chinese leaders than Trudeau: Saint-Jacques

Saint-Jacques, who served as ambassador to China under then-prime minister Stephen Harper, attended Trudeau's first trip to China in the summer of 2016, shortly after the Liberals formed a majority government. But Trudeau didn't make a good first impression, he said.

"Clearly, the prime minister came out as uninformed on the situation in China, a bit arrogant," Saint-Jacques said, "and I had echoes on either side saying, 'Does your prime minister know to whom he is talking?'"

Relations between Trudeau and China's president didn't warm up over the ensuing years, either, culminating in one high-profile spat in 2022 when Xi accused Trudeau of misrepresenting conversations to the media, after Canadian intelligence officials told parliamentarians that China interfered in the 2019 federal election.

Carney, by contrast, is seen as a "serious, well-informed leader," Saint-Jacques said. "I think they are ready for a new start."

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Editorial

Editorial

If Poilievre wants to become prime minister, he should tone down the inflammatory rhetoric

It appears that Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has not learned any lessons from his party's election defeat. Until early January, the Conservatives held a whopping 27-point lead over the Liberals, and virtually every major pollster and pundit predicted a landslide majority win for Poilievre. But the tide turned dramatically, and the Liberals secured a fourth consecutive mandate.

There are several explanations for this reversal, with one being Poilievre's tendency toward inflammatory rhetoric that often crosses the line and alienates moderate voters. His combative style may energize the party's base, but it also reinforces perceptions among centrist and left-leaning Canadians—particularly women voters—that the Conservative leader is Canada's version of U.S. President Donald Trump.

While Poilievre's supporters vehemently reject that comparison, they struggle to defend his frequent use of incendiary language, personal insults, and unsubstantiated accusations aimed at political opponents. The pattern resurfaced recently when, during a podcast interview, he described the RCMP leadership as "despicable," and accused it of covering up for former prime minister Justin Trudeau. He went further, suggesting that Trudeau "probably" broke the law in the SNC-Lavalin affair and should have been jailed.

"These would normally have led to criminal charges, but of course the RCMP covered it all up," Poilievre told *Northern Perspective*, a YouTube channel, last week. "The leadership of the RCMP is frankly just despicable when it comes to enforcing laws against the Liberal government."

It appears that Poilievre is once again turning to provocative rhetoric to rally support ahead of his upcoming leadership review in Calgary, Alta., in January 2026, where rank-and-file members will decide whether he will remain leader. While such provocative statements may help him win short-term backing from grassroots party members, they also reinforce public perceptions of his combative, un-Canadian temperament.

Poilievre should remember that Trudeau stepped down in last January, and Mark Carney is now prime minister. If the Conservative leader wins the upcoming review, he will lead his party in the next election against Carney, not Trudeau. If Poilievre disagrees with the RCMP's decision not to pursue criminal charges, he should present his case based on law and evidence.

Based on current polling numbers, the Conservative Party is running neck and neck with the governing Liberals, but Poilievre is far behind Carney in leadership numbers. The inflammatory language could further undermine his popularity numbers. And the Conservative Party base may vote against him in the leadership review thinking that Poilievre cannot become prime minister.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Image courtesy pexels.com

Port Hope residents continue to be 'collateral damage': letter writer

Re: "For 80 years, Canada has been a leader in the responsible development of nuclear energy: Whitlock," (Letter to the editor, *The Hill Times*, Aug. 11). In his letter to *The Hill Times*, Dr. Jeremy Whitlock mischaracterizes Canada's nuclear performance when stating that "for 80 years, Canada has been a leader in the responsible development of nuclear energy and its many applications."

At its heart are two facilities in Port Hope, Ont., for uranium fuel fabrication and processing. Both are owned by Cameco, licensed by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. The processing complex on Lake Ontario operated as a Crown corporation, Eldorado Nuclear Ltd., from 1944 to 1988. Both operated since the 1940s and 1950s with radioactive emissions to air, soil, and water, although the federal government claims the emissions do not pose a health risk.

Unknowingly, residents inhaled insoluble radioactive particles including natural, depleted, and enriched uranium. The disturbing presence of recycled uranium was revealed by citizen-funded bio-assays of a former worker in 2007.

Presently underway is a $2.6-billion federal remediation of more than 1.2-million cubic metres of wastes from careless handling by Eldorado. Many residents live unknowingly with contaminated homes, schools, roadways, ravines, and beaches. Government policy for many years has refused to disclose the reality of contamination and exposures.

Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) officials acknowledged that the number of small-scale sites requiring remediation in Port Hope significantly exceeded their original estimates, and that there was a 300-per-cent increase in the expected waste volume.

CNL wants to weaken the cleanup criteria for arsenic and in some cases residents are allowed to refuse remediation, actions which contradict AECL officials at a Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission hearing in November 2022 that AECL/CNL firmly believe remediation should not be left to future generations, and seems to contravene the spirit of Legal Agreement with Port Hope.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced plans for the largest nuclear power plant in the world to be fast-tracked for Port Hope, at an OPG-owned site on Lake Ontario (Wesleyville).

Being treated continually as collateral damage to benefit the nuclear industry feels painfully like a violation of our civil and human rights by governments with responsibility to protect them.

Faye More
Cobourg, Ont.

(The letter writer is a volunteer with and chairperson of the Port Hope Community Health Concerns committee.)

Politics

Canada needs to move much closer to Europe and Mexico, our future depends on it

Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured in Ottawa on Oct. 10, 2025. It is pretty much a political platitude these days to say that Canada must diversify its trading partners, rather than continue with a dangerous economic reliance on the United States, writes Michael Harris. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

It's also time we dropped our anti-China bias. With a financially stressed America retreating into self-centred protectionism, it is time for Canada to assert its independence in a world of new allies and new opportunities.

Michael Harris

Harris

HALIFAX—It is pretty much a political platitude these days to say that Canada must diversify its trading partners, rather than continue with a dangerous economic reliance on the United States.

It is no surprise that Prime Minister Mark Carney and Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand are travelling the world to cultivate new and reliable trading relationships.

After all, U.S. President Donald Trump's ruinous tariff rollout on Canadian goods entering the U.S. is expressly designed to boost the American economy by relocating manufacturing in this country to south of the border.

The damage is already showing up. In order to avoid Trump's 25-per-cent import taxes, automaker Stellantis is moving the production of its Jeep Compass from Brampton, Ont., to Illinois. It is part of the company's US$13-billion plan to increase its auto production in the U.S. by 50 per cent over the next four years.

Despite massive funding from Canadian taxpayers, and an agreement with the federal government and Ontario to retain an auto-making footprint in Brampton, 3,000 jobs are now at risk of disappearing. As it walks away from the deal—at least for a year—Stellantis says it is looking for a new vehicle to build in Brampton. No one is holding their breath.

It is the second time in weeks that Ontario Premier Doug Ford, playing the image of Captain Canada, has fumed at the loss of jobs in his province caused by Trump's tariff war.

Ford famously dumped out a bottle of Crown Royal whisky at a press conference after the international owners of the storied booze brand announced that they were shifting some bottling operations from Ontario to the U.S. The premier called the company's owners "dumb as a bag of hammers," and warned that there would be reprisals for putting 200 Canadian jobs at risk.

It is easy to view the Trump tariffs as the game-changer in Canada-U.S. relations. The inference is that if the tariffs were removed, all would be well again. It won't be. Nor will the tariffs be removed.

That's because the tariffs are a mere symptom of a fundamental problem in putting all of our trade eggs in the American basket. The underlining issue is that America is cash-starved and on an "unsustainable fiscal path." Trump's tariff war is just a cash grab by a country that is drowning in debt.

You would never know that from Trump's serendipitous pronouncements on the state of America. The president repeatedly says his nation's economy is the greatest in history, and that the U.S. is the "hottest" country in the world. He talks about tariffs making America "rich" again.

The facts tell a very different story. The U.S. has a national debt of nearly $38-trillion. That represents 125 per cent of the country's gross domestic product, the eighth-worst record in the world. It takes an astonishing $3-billion per day to service the interest on that unimaginable mountain of debt.

The U.S also has the highest total dollar debt on the planet. For the first time in American history, in fiscal 2024, servicing the debt has blown past the trillion-dollar-a-year mark.

And there is no end in sight. With deficits projected to stretch far into the future, it is estimated that it will cost the U.S. $13-trillion to service the debt over the next decade. As of the latest figures, 17 per cent of all federal spending in the U.S. goes to debt servicing. That compares to just five per cent for education.

The consequences of America's increasingly shaky finances are already kicking in. Gold has soared to over $4,000 an ounce, partly because of the downward pressure on the U.S. dollar.

Investors, looking for safe havens for their money, are beginning to move away from U.S. treasury notes—their traditional safe destination—to gold. If the view takes hold that America can't pay down its debt, the U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency could also be at risk.

America's dire financial realty explains some of Trump's otherwise inscrutable policies.

Take Medicare and Medicaid, two entitlement programs that account for a huge amount of Washington's spending. Polling shows that these programs are extremely popular. Yet Trump is hell-bent on taking these benefits away from 14 million Americans. It is bad politics, but necessary cost-cutting.

Bottom line? For the foreseeable future, the U.S. won't be doing any of its trading partners or allies any favours, no matter how close. It will be too busy trying to raise cash and cut costs. And that means that U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick won't be playing Santa Claus any time soon in the ongoing trade talks between Canada and the U.S.

At best, what Canada-U.S. Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc might be able to get is some relief from Trump's crushing sectoral tariffs on steel, aluminum, and auto parts. Every little bit helps, but anyone who believes there might be a return to free trade between Canada and the U.S. is dreaming.

That's why Carney's mission to forge new economic partnerships in response to what some are calling a new, emerging world order less fixated on America is so vital. With so much economic hostility coming from this country's closest neighbour, it is time to move much closer to Europe and Mexico.

And it is also time to deal with—rather than judge—China. Anand's recent visit to that country is a watershed moment. Do we continue to fall in line with U.S. policy towards Beijing, as we did on tariffs against Chinese electric vehicles? Or do we develop our own polices and remove those tariffs so that Canadian canola farmers can once again sell their product into China?

At this moment, the Angus Reid Institute reports that 59 per cent of Canadians view China negatively. That said, the pollster also reported that 27 per cent had a favourable view of China, up 11 points from earlier this year.

It's time we dropped our anti-China bias. With a financially stressed America retreating into self-centred protectionism, it is time for Canada to assert its independence in a world of new allies and new opportunities.

The future depends upon it.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Newfoundland and Labrador election a wake-up call for federal Liberals

The message from the Newfoundland and Labrador election is loud and clear: Rural voices will not be silenced. The Canadian government needs to listen.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner

OTTAWA—The result of the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial election on Oct. 14 should serve as a wake-up call for the federal Liberals.

Of course, the appetite for change is always present when a government has been in power for a decade. But it would be a mistake to think the majority government delivered to the Progressive Conservatives was simply a result of voter fatigue.

Instead, there was an urban/rural split that went undetected in the multiple polls that predicted another Liberal majority.

The polls were wrong. It was quite obvious that the Liberal messaging resonated in the greater St. John's area, but fell pretty flat in the rest of the province.

The Liberals held their own in the provincial capital, which is the heart of Newfoundland media coverage. That strength led pollsters to misread the appetite for change that was rolling across the rest of the province.

Liberal Health and Community Services Krista Lynn Howell was defeated by Andrea Barbour, even though Progressive Conservatives were joking that there were more road-paving announcements than icebergs in her Great Northern Peninsula district before the vote.

Howell lost by 595 votes, which does not seem like a lot. But considering the district included only 4,703 voters, that is more than a 10 per cent margin.

Her job as health and community services minister did not help because one of the main issues promoted by the Progressive Conservatives was major new investment in health care.

The Tory party platform called for an improved patient-nurse ratio, and promised the addition of 50 more nursing education spaces at Memorial University. The party also pledged to tackle government spending, all the while reducing taxes.

On the affordability front, the Progressive Conservatives offered the highest personal-tax exemption in Atlantic Canada, raising the threshold to $15,000 below which no taxes would be paid.

It also promised to increase seniors' benefits by 20 per cent, all the while claiming to reduce government spending.

The Tory platform was only released a few days before the election which meant there was little to attack, but its general focus on health, affordability, and safety appeared to resonate across the province.

Compare that platform to the proposals of the Liberals, who promised hundreds more child care spaces. Child-care spaces are much more popular in urban areas, where an extended family is often not as available to pitch in. The Tories promised to increase the Child Tax Benefit, which goes to every child, not just those whose parents both work outside the home.

Outgoing premier John Hogan tied most of his promised spending increases to the revenue that would be generated from Newfoundland and Labrador's agreement to sell hydroelectric energy to Quebec.

Hogan claimed that most of his promises would be funded by the cash coming from the 2024 memorandum of understanding penned with Quebec by then-Liberal premier Andrew Furey.

The PCs are advocating changes to the MOU, but premier-elect Tony Wakeham insisted throughout the campaign that the MOU was not the biggest issue. Obviously, voters agreed.

In his victory speech, Wakeham suggested he would launch an independent review of the deal, while Quebec Premier François Legault confirmed his government is open to renegotiation.

At the end of the day, the PC's platform dealt with pocketbook and health issues for all parts of the province. The Liberals are the urban party, which wasn't enough to carry them over the finish line.

That same challenge faces the federal Liberals when the lifespan of this minority government is cut short in the next couple of years.

This past spring, Prime Minister Mark Carney was able to present himself as a new face in Parliament, with plenty of experience in the business and international communities.

His triumph was driven, in part, because of the wedge that United States President Donald Trump generated from his incessant calls to annex Canada, and his rude treatment of then-prime minister Justin Trudeau.

But as Carney's own newness wears off, and the bitter effects of Trump's anti-Canada campaign wear the country down, the prime minister will have to put something new on the table.

More attention definitely needs to be paid to rural regions that have been painted a deep swath of blue for the past two decades.

They do not represent the majority, but in a tight election, the votes of rural Canadians could well decide who forms government.

The message from the Newfoundland and Labrador election is loud and clear: Rural voices will not be silenced.

The Canadian government needs to listen.

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

The Hill Times

Canada's changing political right

For better or worse, the Canadian conservative movement is morphing into something new, something different. The voices which once mainly focused on pushing economic issues are fading away.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit

OAKVILLE, ONT.—Famed economist Friedrich Hayek once argued that "conservatism" was an ever-changing ideology.

As he put it, "the position which can be rightly described as conservative ... depends ... on the direction of existing tendencies."

And right now, the direction of existing tendencies in this country is steering us towards a new kind of Canadian conservatism.

Now keep in mind, I'm not talking here about the Conservative Party, but the conservative movement, which includes activists, think tanks, and advocacy groups.

In other words, the Conservative establishment isn't changing; it's the grassroots.

So, what kind of change is happening?

Well, Canada's "right wing" has long included an influential group of what might be called "free-market" conservatives, people who supported—among other things—capitalism, private property rights, individual freedom, and minimal government.

These activists helped elect free-market-oriented leaders such as former Ontario premier Mike Harris and former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper.

It should also be noted that, before he became prime minister, Harper headed up the National Citizens Coalition (NCC), a conservative advocacy group, which at the time, mostly focused on promoting pro-free, market economic policies.

But now free-market conservatives seem to be losing their

Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre, pictured Oct. 9, 2025, on the Hill. The voices which once mainly focused on pushing economic issues are fading away, which will likely have at least some influence on the direction the Conservative party will take under Poilievre, writes Gerry Nicholls. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

clout within the movement as new voices are emerging which believe the real battles that need to be waged must be focused less on economics and more on perceived cultural and social threats.

In other words, many movement conservatives now believe the dragon they need to slay is left-wing "wokism."

Certainly, this is the war cry of online conservative warriors such as Rebel News.

Even the NCC, which, as noted earlier, was once a bastion of pro-free market activism, now seems to be adopting this outlook.

Writing recently in a new conservative website called Without Diminishment, NCC director Alexander Brown declared, "There are those who think we can keep pretending things are the same as they were 20 years ago. They act as though the big issues of our time can be defined exclusively in economic or pocketbook terms, and that restricting discourse to the merits of things like tax cuts and deregulation is a sufficient remedy for what ails our country."

But Brown goes on to say that focusing on "free enterprise" is not a sufficient remedy.

As he put it, conservatives need to pay attention to the "tough social, cultural, and historical issues that are affecting Canada in very real ways."

According to Brown, that means conservatives must do more to celebrate Canada's history, it means they must question policies such as mass immigration, and it means they must not be afraid to touch the "third rail" issues.

It certainly sounds like Brown is pushing right-wing populism, which, keep in mind, isn't necessarily pro-free market.

Of course, one issue that might be at play here for groups like the NCC is that it's a lot easier to raise donations on hot-button "cultural" issues than it is to raise funds on the merits of deregulation.

But it's also possible that Brown is simply reacting to pressure from his group's grassroots base.

At any rate, I'm not arguing here that Brown is taking the wrong direction, nor am I suggesting that conservatives should shy away from taking part in "culture wars."

My only point is that, for better or worse, the Canadian conservative movement is morphing into something new, something different.

More specifically, the voices which once mainly focused on pushing economic issues are fading away.

This will likely have at least some influence on what direction the Conservative Party ultimately takes under Pierre Poilievre.

I'm sure none of this would surprise Hayek.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times


CANADA

COMMENT

The government has never had a stronger hand with Canada Post

Now would be a great opportunity to do the difficult, but necessary things that are required to preserve Canada Post as an institution that will continue to serve Canadians well and efficiently for decades to come.

Matt Gurney

Opinion

TORONTO—Prime Minister Mark Carney hasn't caught a ton of lucky breaks, and given the state of the world these days, he probably shouldn't count on many more. But there is one thing that is going his way: the workers at Canada Post, and their union, seem to have acknowledged reality. And that is an opportunity Carney and his government should not waste.

For those who may not have been paying attention—and unfortunately for CUPW, that was probably a lot of you—the union recently announced that it was suspending its national strike. Instead, it will mount a series of rotating regional strikes. This is still going to have an operational impact on Canada Post's daily grind, and the rotating strikes will obviously make it harder for the postal service to erase the backlog of work created by the national strike.

But, overall, this is a huge pain point that has been taken off Carney's list of worries.

Actually, was it that huge? I'm not a reflexive Canada Post basher. I've confessed before that I can actually get quite misty-eyed thinking about how incredible an accomplishment fast and effective postal services once were. Once upon a time, they were a pretty incredible marker of civilization in advanced societies. It's easy to forget this in an era where communication is dominated by light-speed transmissions over a global data network, but it wasn't all that long ago, in historical terms, when the ability to reliably transmit information on continental scales was transformative.

The problem, to state the obvious, is that we no longer live in an era where getting a parcel or letter across a continent or ocean is a particularly remarkable accomplishment. Most of our daily communication is now handled through other means, and Canada Post has been slow to modernize, despite the blindingly obvious trendline for its finances. The Carney government had signalled last month that it was prepared to take dramatic steps, including the elimination of home delivery, which is what triggered the strike in the first place.

But I'm not convinced many people noticed. The union seems to have unwittingly shot itself in the foot with its last strike in 2024. Millions of Canadians and thousands of businesses learned how to adjust their lives and critical operations so as to not need Canada Post. Canada Post workers undercut their own leverage. After weeks of largely fruitless striking this time, they seem to have realized this.

The resumption of even some work takes pressure off the government. But it also gives it an opportunity. The most devastating thing the union could've done was to go on strike completely. They already did that, it seems to have backfired, and they've stopped after only a few weeks.

Am I nuts in thinking this is a pretty attractive place to be if you're the negotiator for Canada Post, the Crown corporation? Would it also be silly of me to suggest the cabinet ministers keeping a wary eye on this are probably pretty satisfied to see Canada Post's bargaining position dramatically improved?

There are lots of valid ways forward. The Carney government's early signals seem to favour a minimal, stripped-down postal service, with workers largely serving community boxes and operating out of a smaller number of facilities. But there remain all sorts of other options that are worth considering. I continue to hold out some hope for my own personal preferred option, which is to maintain home delivery where it exists, but to cut the frequency to weekly instead of daily. This would save Canada Post money, align services with a more rational level of work, and, well, I like getting my mail at home.

Look, not everything I write here has to be about the greater good, right? Sometimes I just want things because I like them.

But kidding aside, and most important of all, figuring out what to do with Canada Post is just something we need to do because it's important to get it done, and it's important to get it right. The government has never had a stronger hand. Now would be a great opportunity to do the difficult, but necessary things that are required to preserve Canada Post as an institution that will continue to serve Canadians well and efficiently for decades to come.

Matt Gurney is a Toronto-based journalist. He is co-editor of The Line *(ReadTheLine.ca), an online magazine. He can be reached at matt@readtheline.ca.*

The Hill Times

OPINION

Let's not forget Canada Post is a public service

Bottom line is that we must return to thinking of Canada Post as a public service that serves Canadians and not profits, and that the best solution is to have a serious independent investigation into how that can be made to happen. And then do it.

Wojtek Gwiazda

Opinion

MONTREAL—In an ideal world, an enterprise like Canada Post would present facts that could be trusted, and the federal government could then make informed decisions about its future. But, unfortunately, we don't live in an ideal world, and decision-makers must be wary of how Canada Post presents the challenges it faces.

Before the federal government makes any decisions on the postal service, it needs to set up an independent examination of the Crown corporation because Canada Post "facts" can be misleading.

A prime example that fooled almost everyone in 2013 was Canada Post's attempt to pretend that only a small proportion of Canadians still had home delivery. How did they do that?

In a press release on Dec. 11, Canada Post announced that to defray costs at the Crown corporation: "Over the next five years, the one-third of Canadian households that receive their mail at their door will be converted to community mailbox delivery."

Though technically correct—a mail carrier delivers to a mailbox or through a mail slot in a home's door—a deeper analysis of Canada Post statistics showed that this was not the only way to interpret how mail was delivered in Canada. Something even federal ministers at the time in their statements did not understand.

Apart from one-third of deliveries "at their door," the next delivery method "centralized points" such as an apartment lobby boxes represented 25 per cent of mail deliveries in Canada. What's interesting—and disturbing—was that Canada Post did not consider this as "door-to-door" service.

Adding these urban deliveries, brought the "to the door" deliveries up to 58 per cent. Then adding the five per cent of people living in rural areas who received mail in the mailbox at the end of their lane brought the total to 63 per cent. (On top of that businesses and people who received their mail at post office boxes represented 12 per cent of mail deliveries, according to the 2012 annual report of Canada Post.)

What is maddening in the discussion about Canada Post is talk of profitability. This focus only helps those who want to privatize government services and skews what should be abundantly evident: Canada Post is a public service.

It's a service which is supposed to guarantee that, wherever you live in Canada, you can receive mail from other Canadians, or from family and friends elsewhere in the world. A guarantee that supersedes whether it's profitable or not. To suggest that Canada Post should be streamlined is a public relations euphemism for cutting more and more services. And cutting those services will certainly decrease Canadians dependence on mail.

And why all this talk about profitability? When was the last time anyone questioned the profitability of having roads to drive on? These public services are part of a democratic, socially aware society.

We are a vast country. There are enough things that divide us. Surely sending a birthday card to our grandmother's home is the very least we can do?

Most of us live in cities. We live in single-home dwellings, duplexes, and multiplexes. Why shouldn't our mail be delivered to our door? Why should we have to go out to some community box down the street? How safe is that? How likely am I to send a card to my grandmother if she has to trudge down to that mailbox on a cold winter morning?

I will not address all the management failings and decisions that have put Canada Post into the recent string of deficits after years and years of profits. And again, profitability is not the issue. But the mindset of a management that thinks "streamlining" services will improve Canada Post is delusional. If Canadians increasingly can't depend on Canada Post, they won't.

As for the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, it's not only concerned with wages and working conditions. They have shop-floor knowledge and some very convincing proposals to make Canada Post work better for Canadians, and the federal government should study them carefully.

Bottom line is that we must return to thinking of Canada Post as a public service that serves Canadians and not profits, and that the best solution is to have a serious independent investigation into how that can be made to happen. And then do it.

Wojtek Gwiazda is a journalist, photographer and videographer based in Montreal.

The Hill Times

POW
PROTECT OUR WINTERS | CANADA

WE ALL NEED WINTER

AN OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER CARNEY FROM CANADIAN ATHLETES FROM COAST TO COAST TO COAST.

Dear Prime Minister Carney,

Congratulations on your election and we applaud your drive and determination to move swiftly to fast track solutions to some of the most pressing issues facing our country.

As professional athletes, we understand the commitment, hard work and focus needed to achieve ambitious goals. There are complex and important issues to tackle including affordability, housing, the economy, health care and sovereignty. As you prioritize Nation Building Projects to address these challenges, we ask that you consider an issue deeply important to us: protecting our planet.

We are witnessing the impacts of climate change first-hand in our training and events including impacts that jeopardize our ability to safely compete nationally and internationally. From Olympics to World Cups to National Championships, extreme heat, retreating glaciers, reduced snowpack and poor air quality are threatening and have destroyed venues we rely on and need.

When it comes to climate change, time isn't on our side. The solutions exist and we have to act now and together - as a team. We are all part of team Canada. Therefore, we ask you and all members of Parliament to move swiftly to strengthen commitments to meeting Canada's climate targets.

We know climate change has impacts more profound than our ability to compete and represent our country. But it's the love of sport and country that motivates us to be involved in the conversation to protect the future of sport as well as the places and experiences we love.

Sincerely,

77 Canadian Athletes from Coast to Coast to Coast

Adam Campbell – Ski Mountaineering / Trail Running / Climbing – 6-time Canadian Champion-World Champion Medalist, **Alannah Yip** – Sport Climbing – Tokyo 2020 Olympics, **Alex Beaulieu-Marchand** – Ski Slopestyle – Peyongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Medalist – 5x X-Games Medalist, **Alexandra Montminy** – Aerial Skiing – World Cup, **Alexi Godbout** – Professional Skiing Athlete, **Amelia Smart** – Alpine Skiing – 2022 Winter Olympics, **Andreane Lanthier Nadeau** – Enduro Mountain Biking – World Championships 2025, **Anne-Marie Lefrançois** – Alpine Skiing – Salt Lake City 2002 Olympics, **Anna Segal** – Ski Slopestyle – 2014 Winter Olympics & X-Games / World Cup Medalist, **Ashleigh McIvor** – Ski Cross – Vancouver 2010 Olympics – Gold Medalist, **Audrey McManiman** – Snowboard Cross – Beijing 2022 Olympics – Winter Youth Olympic Gold Medalist, **Ben Poechman** – Professional Snowboard Athlete, **Cameron Spalding** – Freestyle Snowboard – 2025 World Cup Crystal Globe Winner, **Celeste Pomerantz** – Backcountry Skiing / Mountain Biking – Multi-discipline athlete, **Charlie Fontaine** – Freestyle Skiing Aerial – World Championship Engadin 2025, **Chris Rubens** – Pioneer Freeski Athlete, **Cindy Ouellet** – Wheelchair Basketball / Nordic Skiing – Paris 2024 – 6x Paralympian – World Championship 1st place 2014, **Cole Carey** – Mogul Skiing – Canada Winter Games Medalist 2023, **David Carrier-Porcheron** – Professional Snowboard Athlete – Natural Selection Competitor, **Devon Clarke** – Cycling – 2x Canadian National Gravel Champion, **Émile Nadeau** – Aerial Skiing – Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, **Elladj Balde** – Figure Skating – 2014 ISU World Figure Skating Championships, **Elliot Jamieson** – Enduro Mountain Bike – 2025 Canadian National Champion, **Elly Hoskin** – Enduro Mountain Biking – 2025 World Champion & Canadian National Champion, **Erin Latimer** – Alpine Skiing – 2014 & 2018 Paralympics Medalist, **Florence Laroche** – Freestyle Skiing (Moguls) – World Cup 2025 Val St-Côme – NorAm Tour 3rd Place, **Gabriel Dion** – Freestyle Skiing (Aerials) – World Cup Lac-Beauport 2024, **Greg Hill** -Ski Mountaineering – World Championships 2004, 2006; North American Championships 2003, 2004, **Hannah Turkington** – Snowboard Cross – 2024 Youth Olympic Games, **Ian McIntosh** – Skiing – Freeride World Tour Competitor, **Izzy Lynch** – Professional Skiing Athlete, **Jeff Bean** – Freestyle Skiing – Olympic Games, **Jenny Casson** – Rowing – Paris 2024 & Tokyo 2021, **Jesse Melamed** – Cycling – World Championships Switzerland 2025 – 2× World Cup Overall Champion, **Jessica Linton** – Freestyle Skiing – World Championships 2025, **Julia Murray** – Ski Cross – Vancouver 2010 Olympics, **Jules Burnotte** – Biathlon – Beijing 2022 Olympics, **Jean-Christophe Bougie** – Mogul Skiing – Junior Worlds Championship 2024, **Jonasina Clegg** – Freestyle Mogul Skiing – Val St-Côme World Cup, **Justin Lamoureux** – Snowboard Halfpipe – 2006 & 2010 Winter Olympics, **Karsten Madsen** – Mountain Bike / Triathlon – ITU Triathlon World Championships, **Katie Vincent** – Canoe-Kayak Sprint – Olympics 2020 & 2024 – Olympic & World Champion, **Kate Ediger** – Snowboarding – Big Mountain Free Ride – CSGA Snowboard Guide, **Kelly VanderBeek** – Alpine Skiing – Olympics 2006 – World Cup Medallist, **Kelsey Serwa** – Ski Cross – Olympic Gold & Silver Medalist, 2× X Games Champion, **Kim Lamarre** – Slopestyle Skiing – 2014 & 2018 Olympics -Bronze Medalist, **Laurianne Desmarais-Gilbert** – Moguls Skiing – 2025 World Championships, **Leah Evans** – Professional Skiing Athlete, **Lucia Stafford** – Track and Field – 2020 & 2024 Olympic Games – 2025 NACAC Bronze Medalist, **Maghalie Rochette** – Cycling-World Cup Champion, **Marie-France Roy** – Snowboarding – X Games, **Marion Thénault** – Freestyle Skiing (Aerials) – Beijing 2022 Olympics – Olympic Bronze Medalist, **Melissa Humana-Paredes**– Beach Volleyball – Tokyo 2021 & Paris 2024 – Olympic Silver Medalist / World Champion, **Maya Mikkelsen** – Freestyle Mogul Skiing – World Cup, **Mercedes Nicoll** – Snowboard Halfpipe – 4x Winter Olympian (2006–2018), **Mike Douglas** – Godfather of Freeskiing – Canadian Skiing Hall of Fame, **Natalie Allport** – Snowboarding – Freeride World Tour / FIS World Cup – 2025 Freeride Champion of the Americas, **Natalie Segal** – Freeride Skiing – Freeride World Tour 2013, **Oliver Scholfield** – Field Hockey – Tokyo 2020 Olympics, **Philippe Marquis** – Freestyle Skiing (Moguls) – Sochi 2014 & PyeongChang 2018 – World Cup Gold Medalist – World Championships Silver Medalist, **Remi Bélanger** – Aerial Skiing – World Championship, **Robin Vangyn** – Backcountry Snowboarding – Natural Selection 2023 Competitor, **Rosalie Gagnon** – Freestyle Skiing – World Cup, **Sandy Ward** – Snowboarding / Mountain Biking Athlete – Indigenous Advocate, **Sean Miskiman** – Slopestyle Snowboarding – Junior World Championship / World Cup Tour, **Sophia Jensen**– Canoe / Kayak – Olympics – 10× World Champion, **Spencer O'Brien** – Snowboarding – 2014 & 2018 Winter Olympics – 2× World Champion, X Games Gold Medalist, NST Champion, **Stan Rey** – Freeride Skiing – 2012 X-Games – Canadian National Champion, **Sydney Payne** – Rowing – Tokyo 2020 & Paris 2024 – Olympic Medalist, **Taylor Godber** – Backcountry Snowboarding Professional Athlete, **Thomas Grandi** – Alpine Skiing – 1994, 1998, 2002, 2004 Olympics – World Cup Winner, **Tim Emmett** – Climbing – Multiple First Ascents – Ice Climbing Pioneer, **Vaea Verbeeck** – Mountain Biking – Red Bull Hardline – 3x Crankworx Champion, **Victor Primeau** – Freestyle Skiing – World Championships 2025 – 2022 World Junior Champion, **Wei Tien Laviolette Ho** – Freeride Skiing & Enduro Mountain Biking – FWT & Enduro World Cup – Dual-Sport Elite Athlete, **Will Gadd** – Ice Climbing – Four-time Canadian National Sport Climbing Champion, Ice World Cup Winner, Canadian and US Nationals Paragliding Champion, **Yuki Tsubota** – Ski Slopestyle – 2014 & 2018 Winter Olympics

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COMMENT

This is a wake-up call for Canada's slumbering corporate class

Prime Minister Mark Carney arrives at the House of Commons for Question Period on Oct. 1, 2025. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

The question: is corporate Canada ready to do its part? It certainly won't refuse emergency funding to see it through the current uncertainty. But how able, and willing, is it to disrupt decades-old supply chains, retool its factories, and redirect its efforts away from the United States?

Susan Riley

Impolitic

CHELSEA, QUE.—Prime Minister Mark Carney has an audacious plan to save the Canadian economy from United States President Donald Trump's punitive tariffs, and he is putting up a lot of money to back his promise. The proposal is nothing less than taking control of our own destiny.

His senior ministers and public servants are working long hours and accumulating astronomical numbers of frequent-flyer points in an effort to get this revolution—rethinking of the way we have always done business—in motion, all the while trying to salvage some part of the American market for Canadian goods through continuing negotiations in Washington, D.C.

Some premiers are becoming uneasy, but most are largely behind federal initiatives aimed at using more of our own steel, lumber and aluminum at home (why didn't someone think of this before?) and opening new markets in Europe, Asia and the Pacific for all manner of Canadian resources and products. It has taken a crisis, but with it comes an unprecedented opportunity to develop our own more independent economy, using our own abundant natural and human resources.

The question: is corporate Canada ready to do its part? It certainly won't refuse emergency funding to see it through the current uncertainty. But how able, and willing, is it to disrupt decades-old supply chains, retool its factories, and redirect its efforts away from the U.S.?

And why hasn't it done so before now? The softwood lumber industry, for instance, has been harassed by its U.S. competitors, backed by the U.S. trade office, since at least 1982, with various anti-dumping and countervailing duties based on inflated claims that the Canadian sector receives unfair subsidies from provincial governments through low fees for harvesting lumber on crown land. Despite endless, costly legal battles—some of which Canada won—the industry has seen its American market share whittled away over the years.

Even so, it continues to send 90 per cent of its product south as American builders rely on Canadian wood. There has been talk of diversifying for decades—selling to Europe, China, even Africa, because B.C. lumber, in particular, is valued for its quality.

Provincial and federal governments, industry experts, various academics have long urged the industry to sell value-added lumber products, including wood-fibre insulation, specially engineered boards and walls, millwork, rather than just raw boards. Yet, apart for small incursions into Japan with earthquake-proof walls for high-rise building, Canada's softwood sector remains hopelessly dependent on its churlish, unpredictable neighbour.

Now, with 45-per-cent Trump tariffs hitting last week, British Columbia Premier David Eby says the industry faces an "existential crisis"—and not only in B.C., but to varying degrees in New Brunswick, Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba. Eby notes that forestry supports some 200,000 jobs in Canada, many in small mill towns dotted across the north.

It also contributes more to the GDP than autos, or steel, although you would never know it, says Eby, because it is a largely western-based industry, and not top-of-mind in Ottawa. There may be some truth to his complaint, although softwood lumber has been a burning issue in the national capital since Brian Mulroney's days in office, and actually spurred the drive towards the first Canada-U.S. free trade deal.

Nor has the industry been completely ignored. In August, the Carney government announced a $1.2-billion fund to transform the sector, broaden its product offerings, help retool old mills, retrain forestry workers, and see companies through the immediate crisis. In other words, the same initiatives that have been urged on the industry for decades—only this time, government is paying.

Obviously, there are reasons, beyond human complacency, that more Canadian industries have not diversified—either their products or their markets. Canadian softwood faces competition in Japan, only a tiny portion of its market, from Europe and Russia, for instance. And it takes money and time to develop new markets and products and new, affordable shipping options. The U.S. is so close, so wealthy, and so accessible. There are few language or culture barriers; business practises are similar, if not identical. And there is, above all, familiarity. Who willingly gives up stability for risk?

Entrepreneurs do. And there are innovative CEOs, hard-working small-business owners, academics willing to jump from a secure tenures to the market to develop and sell a unique product. But, overall—and especially with banks and entrenched resource industries—Canada has always had a risk-averse corporate culture.

In fact, for all the disdain levelled at governments, they have often led in innovation—pushing reluctant companies to adopt new technologies. Not long ago, the federal and provincial government committed $40-billion to induce Ontario auto-makers to build electric batteries and vehicles.

Those plans were rudely interrupted by the return of Trump, who is not only hostile to electric vehicles, but determined to move the entire auto industry south. His tactics are already working; last week Stellantis announced it would not be building its Jeep Compass in Brampton, Ont., after all, but moving production to Illinois, and putting 3,000 future jobs at risk.

So much for the millions of dollars various governments have either promised or invested in Stellantis, and other foreign auto-makers over the decades. "Where's the loyalty?" Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown asked after Stellantis' announcement. Where it always is: to the bottom line.

For years, the North American auto sector has been advanced as a free trade triumph, an integrated industry that provided good jobs on both sides of the border (and in Mexico). Those days are over, and Canada is now paying the price for having no ownership stake in what has always been someone else's industry. Why build a Canadian car when there are already so many global manufacturers—some right next door?

But the oil and gas industry is, perhaps, the most notorious corporate grifter when it comes to expecting taxpayers to absorb risk, while it pockets huge profits (particularly recently). It also creates jobs, of course, and contributes to federal and provincial treasuries, but has been historically reluctant to pay for the damage it causes to the environment.

Indeed, it currently wants *carte blanche* to keep pumping greenhouse gas emissions while taxpayers significantly underwrite a proposed $16-billion carbon capture and storage facility in northern Alberta that is supposed to produce "decarbonized" oil. (Is that because industry insiders know the technology doesn't work at large scale, and will become a white elephant because of a shrinking market for fossil fuels—and they want someone else to pay?)

More than a decade ago, then-Conservative finance minister Jim Flaherty had to plead with corporate Canada to use its passive cash reserves to invest in new businesses, to expand, create jobs, and galvanize a lagging economy. He was supported by then-Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney, who accused companies of sitting on "dead money" rather than expanding their firms or returning money to investors.

Conservatives like Pierre Poilievre, liberated from responsibility of governing, are always ready to blame government for a limp and unresponsive private sector. Too heavily taxed; strangled by regulation; punished for succeeding—we all know the mantra.

In fact, Canada's corporate tax rate of 15 per cent is lower than the 21 per cent general U.S. rate, and on par, or slightly lower, than rates among G7 counterparts. In his brief time in office, Carney has already addressed several other conservative complaints (for better or worse), moving to remove interprovincial trade barriers and eliminating proposed capital gains increases. He hasn't entirely lifted environmental regulations on fossil fuel companies, but has expressed flexibility.

Meanwhile, his $5-billion Strategic Response Fund, aimed at industries hardest hit by tariffs like steel and aluminum, has stimulated signs of life in some corners. Algoma Steel, for one, appears eager to replace lost American buyers by contributing steel to the rebuilding of Canada's military and to Carney's so-called "major projects" once they start rolling out.

As for aluminum, Innovation Minister Mélanie Joly recently highlighted a Quebec aluminum firm, Aluminerie Alouette, which sent four per cent of exports to Europe in the first quarter of 2025, and 57 per cent in the second quarter.

It won't be as easy, or as fast, for larger firms to shift gears, but it should not be impossible with dynamic corporate leadership and federal cash.

As former finance minister Flaherty—hardly an enemy of big business—said during a 2012 economic slump: "The government cannot do this alone. Private sector business investment must also help lay the foundation of a sustained, longer-run expansion of Canada's economy and jobs growth."

Given the dimension of the current crisis, that remains especially pertinent advice. Will corporate Canada take it, or will it defend a status quo that no longer exists?

Susan Riley writes a regular column for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

A note about protecting Indigenous Peoples in the 2025 budget

In the budget discussions, it might be worth remembering that reconciliation means fixing systems that are broken. This includes wildly huge administrative budgets.

Rose LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths

Much has been said about this year's budget, and its coming in a time of austerity, a time of economic pressures. But there's the issue. This federal government maintains and moves money for First Nations health care, but doesn't pay nearly the amount per person that all other Canadians receive. This federal government also moves this money with a shocking amount of overhead, which is probably twice the amount that any other health ministry would dare call its administration amount.

At least 42 cents of every dollar that goes to Indigenous Services Canada doesn't get out of its offices—that's the cost of administration. If Canadian health care or social programs were managed like this, we'd have no hospitals, no doctors, no equitable salaries for health care workers, and no benefits. There would be a massive citizen outcry and governments would fall! But this is what Indigenous health looks like. Just over half of every dollar is allocated to actual services, and that's a crime in this day and age. In any day and age.

That portion of money—just over half—that actually gets out to First Nations is crucial for their well-being. It's all the health prevention, promotion, and emergency response they have in community, as virtually no province or territory allocates health care funding to First Nations.

It cannot be lumped into other federal programming, and be open to reduction measures. That would be literally taking food out of children's hands, or bedding out of dilapidated nursing clinics far down ice roads or in fly-in communities. A sweeping 15-per-cent cut—as requested by Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne—should not touch life-saving work.

But a 15-per-cent cut to Indigenous Services Canada could easily be applied to its administrative costs with no repercussions to the funds that go directly to First Nations communities.

In 2022-2023, the department's internal budget for all things administrative was $295,617,247, as per its 2025-26 departmental plan. Just two years later, in 2024-25, it has increased by nearly 25 per cent to more than $367-million. There's more than 8,500 full-time equivalents in this department, which is an increase of more than 1,000 in the past two years.

Has their speed of moving the money to communities increased? Are nursing clinics on reserve open for more hours? Do we even know that there has been a correlative increase in effectiveness? A 30-per-cent cut on administration might actually be worth it.

On the other hand, Indigenous Services Canada is obligated to pay out sums of money in the billions of dollars as court-ordered settlements (due to legal challenges about the lack of clean water as a basic human right, horrendous child welfare funding, etc.). Settlements are a one-time thing, and that alone will decrease the overall budget in a year or two.

But the whole point of court-ordered settlements is compensation, and a show of payer's contrition to fix those problems so they never happen again. But have we seen the actual fixes to the broken things? This is also not clear. An overall decrease in budget due to the sunsetting of court-ordered settlements is a smokescreen in the budget, covering up that the fundamental inequities continue.

In the budget discussions and quiet fights at interdepartmental tables about austerity, it might be worth remembering that reconciliation means fixing systems that are broken, including wildly huge administrative budgets. Every department is responsible to uphold reconciliation, even at these budget tables. Every grant and contribution dollar must be protected as if they were legally and morally obligated to continue for life and limb. Unless a policy analyst wants to write that briefing note stating that Indigenous health is just a policy and can be underfunded because nobody will complain? That would sound eerily like the 1940s all over again.

Rose LeMay is Tlingit from the West Coast and the CEO of the Indigenous Reconciliation Group. She writes twice a month about Indigenous inclusion and reconciliation. In Tlingit worldview, the stories are the knowledge system, sometimes told through myth and sometimes contradicting the myths told by others. But always with at least some truth.

The Hill Times

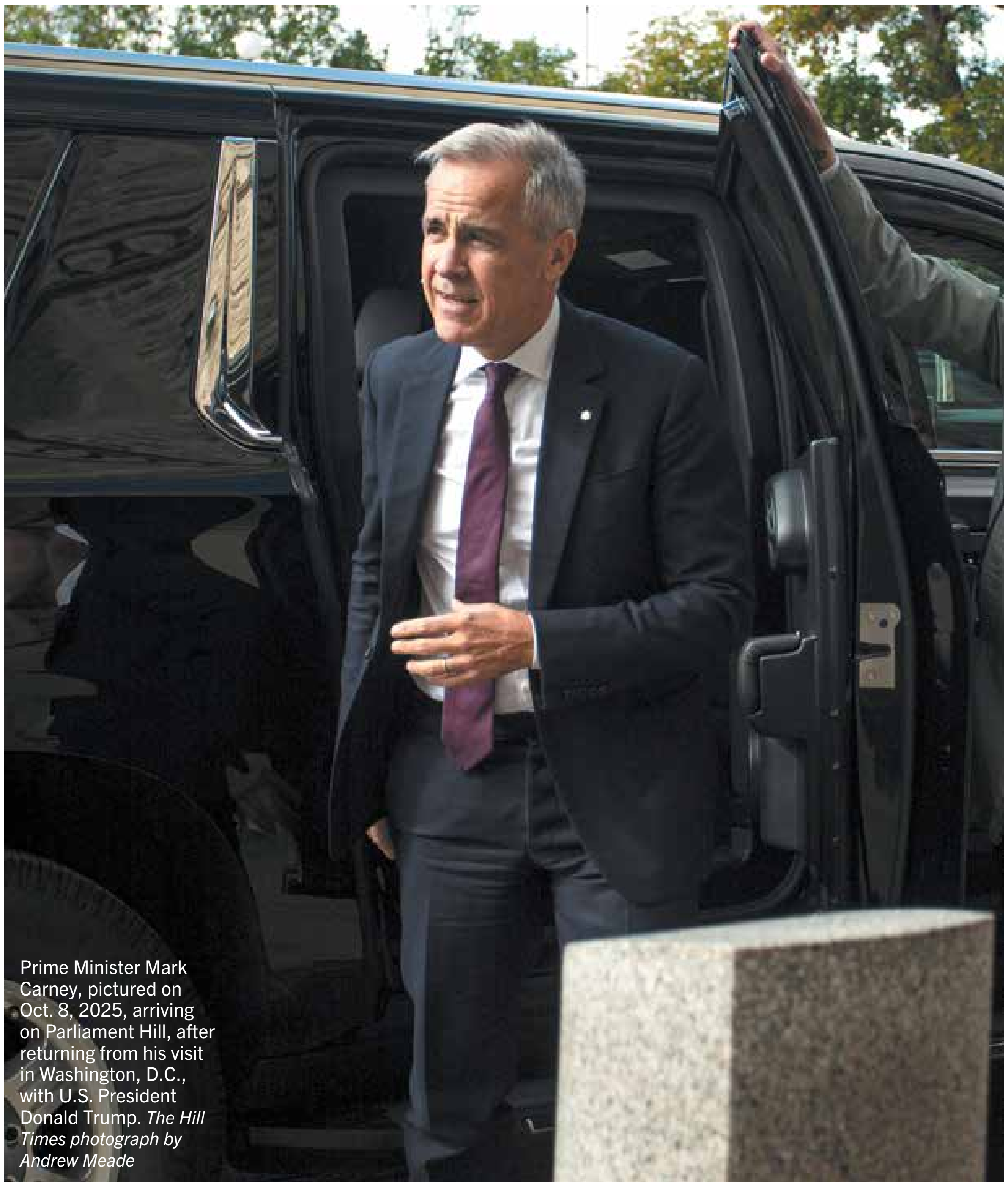
COMMENT

Canadian foreign policy as performance art

Where does Canada fit into Gaza's new reality, if at all? Providing more humanitarian aid in the form of food and medical supplies is easy, but it is doubtful that Ottawa would contribute any soldiers as part of the temporary stabilization force envisaged in Trump's plan.

Nelson Wiseman

Opinion



Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured on Oct. 8, 2025, arriving on Parliament Hill, after returning from his visit in Washington, D.C., with U.S. President Donald Trump. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

TORONTO—Canadians excel at virtue signalling. It is a form of performance art and is inevitably theatrical as it is conducted in public. Much of it falls flat. Does Canada's recognition of a Palestinian state qualify?

United States President Donald Trump warned Canada that recognition would negatively affect trade negotiations with Ottawa, but it hasn't. Indeed, Trump summoned Prime Minister Mark Carney to a second Oval Office meeting earlier this month, telling him of the "mutual love" between the two countries, that Canadians would be "very happy" with the trade deal they make, and that the prime minister is a "very strong, very good leader."

Carney had better things to do than to fly to Sharm El-Sheikh for little more than a photo-op with Trump—a performance artist extraordinaire. But when summoned by the American president, he couldn't say no, even though the role he was asked to play was a bit part in Trump's orchestrated media production reminiscent of a circus.

Along with about 150 other countries, Canada has now recognized an entity without borders, capital city, or a functioning unitary government. The United Nations granted Palestine observer status more than a decade ago, but to no effect on the ground. Canada contends that changing its long-standing policy *vis-à-vis* the Israel/Palestine conundrum may make a difference. We shall see.

Canada's new position is consistent with the hopeful boy-scout outlook it adopted in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. At that time, this country was an international player on nuclear issues, refugees, and global food challenges. Today, it is very much a follower and bystander on the world stage.

Canada's new Israel/Palestine policy broke with its traditional alignment with the U.S. on the issue, but was in harmony with Carney's cultivation of ties with Britain and France, countries he visited within hours of being sworn in as prime minister earlier this year. Like Britain and France's positions on Palestinian statehood, Canada may be engaging in wish casting, adopting a policy based more on hope and desire than objective fact or evidence. Perhaps hope is the only realistic approach to what has been an intractable problem.

As more countries recognized a Palestinian state, ostensibly as a way station to a "two-state solution," the further away it appeared, like a mirage on the horizon. Then Trump intervened in the Israel/Hamas conflict by boxing in both sides.

Paradoxically, as Palestine's international recognition grew and Israel became more of a pariah among its traditional allies, more Arab governments signalled acceptance of Israel's place in the Middle East once the war ended. These states, which long saw Israel as nothing but a Western colonial imposition in their neighbourhood, now fear it as a potential regional hegemon. They have witnessed what it has done to Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, and now Yemen's Houthis. Even Syria, at war with Israel since its 1948 founding, is negotiating a security deal with Jerusalem, a baby step to potential recognition.

With the first step of Trump's so-called "peace plan" operationalized with the recent release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, there is great hope in the air. The American plan calls for a pathway to Palestinian statehood, something the current Israeli government has vowed will never happen. For its part, Hamas continues to govern in Gaza, and its Charter calls for Israel's destruction and to "fight Jews and kill them" wherever they live.

Where does Canada fit into the new reality, if at all? Providing more humanitarian aid in the form of food and medical supplies is the easy part, but it is doubtful that Ottawa would contribute any soldiers as part of the temporary stabilization force envisaged in Trump's plan.

Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand says Canada is "exploring all avenues, including in the area of governance in the future State of Palestine," but that assumes that the Palestinian Authority will govern Gaza. Carney's whimsical predicates for recognizing Palestine were the PA's promise to hold elections next year and a demilitarized Palestine. Palestinians last held a presidential election two decades ago, and Hamas has not permitted elections since taking power in Gaza in 2007.

We live in an anarchic world. Striving for international stability and peace is honourable, but the world has never had it. The UN, the cornerstone of Ottawa's foreign policy 1945, is "a tired joke," a former senior Canadian ambassador told me. It wouldn't condemn Hamas' October 2023 massacre until last month. In a biting comment on Canada's stature, its proposal at the UN to condemn Hamas' massacre shortly after the war began, was voted down.

Will Canada withdraw recognition of Palestine if Carney's predicates—a demilitarized Palestine and elections in 2026—don't pan out? If he did, it would truly be performance.

Nelson Wiseman is professor emeritus of political science at the University of Toronto.

The Hill Times

The Hill Times Policy Briefing | October 20, 2025

INNOVATION

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Innovation Minister Mélanie Joly, pictured in Ottawa. *The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia*

INNOVATION Policy Briefing

As Canada feels the strain of U.S. trade war, pressure heats up on innovation sector

As border tensions create investment uncertainty, innovation in Canada should look at trade diversification and focusing less on commodities, say innovation experts.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT


Industry Minister Mélanie Joly unveiled a three-pillar industrial strategy on Oct. 9 intended to support Canadian industries, create jobs, and attract global investment to protect Canada from the impacts of punishing American tariffs. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*


Peter Phillips, professor emeritus and founding director of the University of Saskatchewan's Johnson-Shoyama Centre for the Study of Science and Innovation Policy, says, 'We've got to make it easier for people to trial and test things.' *Photograph courtesy of Peter Phillips*


Interim NDP leader Don Davies says, 'Our fragmented national strategy, I think, is something that the federal government has to address.' *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Economic uncertainty due to the current trade war with the United States is putting some pressure on innovation and industry in Canada, and powering through will require a strategy involving emphasis on not just developing new products, but how to adopt new ideas, say experts.

"I think that's one of our big weaknesses in Canada; we fixate too much on inventing world firsts, and somehow moving those into the marketplace so that we can get one of these mythical unicorns where we exit with a billion dollars out of them or more," said Peter Phillips, professor emeritus and founding director of the University of Saskatchewan's Johnson-Shoyama Centre for the Study of Science and Innovation Policy.

"The real return is … getting skilled people who are able to take the best technologies, the best processes, the best intelligence, and tweak it to their needs."

When asked if the trade war is placing a strain on Canada's innovation sectors, Phillips said the answer is yes and no. A lot of Canada's venture capital industry is "inextricably linked" with the U.S., and current trade tensions have made the border "more visible" to investors, he said.

"I haven't seen any evidence yet, but just the physical difficulty of crossing the border, and the noise around the border, I think, will reduce the enthusiasm for American venture capital funds to be heavily engaged in Canada. That's a bit of a downside," said Phillips.

"The upside is that means that while we may not get some of that really highly-tuned venture capital, it creates an opportunity to—perhaps more domestically—drive some of these technologies into commercial application in the markets without giving up all the equity."

Phillips argued that current messaging he's seen from the federal government, which emphasizes moving faster and more aggressively on industry and innovation projects, is good. However, he said it is also important that not too much focus be placed on developing "home runs" in innovation. Phillips described a problem of "techno-fetishism" where people can become too fixated on developing innovative technologies, and not thinking enough about different ways to advance production capacity and adoption.

"We've had a long period of talking about it; the information age, the biotechnology age. Now we're in the [artificial intelligence] age. And yes, those are important, but the real return on the investment is when everybody uses cellphones and computers. Real return on investment is when the bio age leads to new crops, new animal production systems, new health treatments," he said.

"We've got to make it easier for people to trial and test things so that that they can decide whether they generate a benefit to them in terms of their particular circumstances, and that's within the industrial space and the productive space, but also within the consumption space."

If Ottawa wants to support innovation, Phillips recommended investing in programs such as the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP), an innovation assistance program for small and medium-sized businesses.

"We keep reinventing new programs that have a fancier buzz to them and choking off or under-investing in programs that have proven value. IRAP is a great one," said Phillips.

"It matches skilled workers with small-, and medium-sized enterprises that have a real technological problem or marketing problem, and the person they match them with solves the problem for them. Programs like that are really high return in the long run because they're actually addressing the problem where it really is at the firm level."

Canada needs a national innovation strategy: Don Davies

Interim NDP leader Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.) told *The Hill Times* that U.S. President Donald Trump's "onshoring and aggressive trade policy" has contributed to an existing problem of weak business and research and development (R&D) investment in Canada.

"I think that when you have Trump inject uncertainty into the economy, then Canadian businesses who are already investing about half as much in new R&D as the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] average, that has frozen even that investment. It creates that uncertainty, and so capital doesn't invest, and that exacerbates the problem," Davies said.

"Trump has caused us to focus more on resource extraction, which I think actually goes in the opposite direction of where we want to be, which is transitioning from raw resource extraction to more secondary and tertiary value extraction, and higher innovation and technology sectors."

Davies said Canada needs to develop a national innovation strategy that would bring together elements including public research-targeted private incentives and industrial policy. That strategy would need to target strategic sectors in which Canada has shown a competitive advantage, which would be artificial intelligence, clean technology, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing, according to Davies.

"Our fragmented national strategy, I think, is something that the federal government has to address," said Davies.

"To quote [Wayne] Gretzky, you have to look where the puck is going. I think those are all four areas where the leading economies of the world are moving into, so they're high value, they're intellectual property-based, they're exportable, they're clean, and I think they're socially productive as well."

Canada must 'get out of the commodity business': Dan Breznitz

Dan Breznitz, professor and Munk Chair of Innovation Studies in the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto, told *The Hill Times* that Canada's productivity problem was present before the arrival of Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) and the return of Trump.

"Nothing has been done about that, and now with the tariffs … it is even more crucial that we actually have a lot more innovation because the last place we want to be in the world of Trump's tariffs and tariff war is selling commodities," he said.

"Unfortunately, I have not seen anything by the Carney government that does anything to help. The only thing I've seen is declarations that we need to find different or more diverse markets for our commodities."

Breznitz argued that Canada needs to "get out of a commodity

Continued on page 30

INNOVATION Policy Briefing

Health care and AI: a uniquely Canadian opportunity

If we put health at the centre of Canada's AI strategy, we can strengthen our healthcare system while lowering costs, improving patient care, boosting productivity, accelerating life-changing health discoveries, and growing a globally competitive industry that pays dividends for decades.

Michelle McLean

Opinion

AI can deliver immense social and economic benefits, and no sector offers a higher potential return on investment or stronger public support than healthcare, writes Michelle McLean. *Photograph courtesy of Darko Stojanovic, Pixabay.com*

A lot has been said about Canada as a world leader in artificial intelligence. We have one of the fastest-growing concentrations of AI talent in the G7, and a robust ecosystem for start-ups. But while we may lead the world in the development of AI applications, no clear consensus has emerged on where Canada should focus government investment to have the greatest benefit.

AI is a powerful tool with the capacity to transform nearly every aspect of our lives, but as with any tool, its impact depends on where it is applied. With the ability to transform our healthcare system, improve care for every patient, revolutionize health research, and drive significant economic growth, the health sector must be at the top of Canada's AI agenda.

Healthcare is not just another sector. It is the industry that Canadians arguably value and depend on more than any other. It is the second-largest employer in our economy, dominates provincial budgets, and is a top priority of the public in every region of the country. What is not as widely recognized is that by developing and scaling digital innovations like AI in healthcare and health research, Canada can also build a modern, resilient economy that better balances our knowledge and natural resources economies.

Other countries are already demonstrating the return on investment for broad adoption of AI in healthcare. The United Kingdom's National Health Service's AI lab, created to better integrate AI in health care and to help grow their economy, reported that a successful diagnostic AI tool built at the cost of 1.9-million pounds showed a whopping 44-million pounds in benefits.

The potential for AI in healthcare is clear. At Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto, and at Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services, AI-assisted image-guided therapy is improving outcomes and streamlining care. At Unity Health Toronto, forecasting tools saved nearly $1-million per year, and ICU monitoring reduced unexpected mortality by more than 20 per cent. At CIUSSS West-Central Montreal, AI scheduling boosted access to oncology care by 10 per cent, and cut booking times by 80 per cent. At Island Health in British Columbia, rural communities can now access AI-driven ultrasound. The Nova Scotia Health Authority operates an AI-enabled command centre that connects hospitals across the province in real time.

If there is any sector where AI can deliver measurable impact through improving care, cutting costs, enhancing efficiency, increasing productivity, and spurring economic development, this is it.

However, developing and adopting innovative solutions hospital by hospital, province by province, is an expensive approach to innovation and makes it challenging to share best practices, build trust among providers and patients as well as scale what works across the system. What's more, without federal leadership, Canada will struggle to capture the enormous economic potential of Canadian-made AI healthcare solutions. The current decentralized approach of each health organization, system or province using a unique and differentiated process for procurement, adoption, and scaling solutions will not deliver system-wide efficiencies or lasting savings and does little to support the growing commercialization opportunities for Canadian innovators and industry partners.

The path forward is clear. We must build trust and skills: providers, patients, and policymakers need stronger digital and AI literacy skills, so these tools are understood and used responsibly. Hospitals, clinicians, patients, researchers, and industry must have spaces to collaborate, test and scale new solutions, supported by clear, centralized procurement pathways that allow proven Canadian technologies to spread across the system and succeed internationally.

AI can deliver immense social and economic benefits, and no sector offers a higher potential return on investment or stronger public support than healthcare. If we put health at the centre of Canada's AI strategy, we can strengthen our healthcare system while lowering costs, improving patient care, boosting productivity, accelerating life-changing health discoveries, and growing a globally competitive industry that pays dividends for decades. This is not just good health policy. It is good economic policy, and why investments in AI for health must be at the top of the federal government's priority list.

Led by president and CEO Michelle McLean, HealthCareCAN convenes national health-care leaders, provides health workforce professional development, and provides strategic advice to strengthen care, research and innovation in Canada.

The Hill Times

Investing in the future of Canadian agriculture: a strategic imperative

Bold investment in agriculture and agri-food innovation can restore Canada's global leadership and drive economic growth.

Trevor Heck

Opinion

While Canada grapples with its economic uncertainty, one of our most powerful growth engines sits overlooked. Agriculture and agri-food—a sector that contributes $150-billion annually to our GDP and employs 2.3-million Canadians—isn't receiving the attention it deserves despite outperforming automotive, forestry, and even oil and gas in economic impact. If Canada wants to meet Prime Minister Mark Carney's ambition of being the fastest-growing economy in the G7, it must urgently recognize and invest in this undervalued economic powerhouse.

According to a report by RBC, Canada's global market share in agriculture alone has decreased by 12 per cent since 2000, while competitors like Brazil and Australia have gained ground in fast-growing markets. I witnessed first-hand how agriculture and agri-food can be prioritized when I traveled to Brazil earlier this year, seeing farmers, industry, and government working shoulder to shoulder to advance the sector.

What's needed in this country is clear: a focused strategy that brings together government and stakeholders to prioritize investments in the sector. This approach will directly support Canadian agriculture while driving progress across multiple national objectives: expanding our export markets and building our reputation as a reliable trading partner; establishing leadership in innovation; and bringing down the cost of food for Canadians.

A key reason Canada is losing ground on the world stage is that our agricultural research and development (R&D) spending is falling behind. It dropped from $0.86-billion in 2013 to $0.68-billion in 2022—ranking us last among the top seven OECD countries. We risk falling further behind without decisive action.

The government should prioritize creating a more attractive climate for private investment in agriculture. First and foremost, this includes bringing predictability and agility to our regulatory system, which will provide confidence for investors. While tax incentives for companies to invest in R&D for all sectors (e.g., SRED tax credits) are available, agriculture-specific tax provisions could better promote technology development and adoption. Bringing together farmers, scientists, and other sector stakeholders to co-develop and test innovative technologies and on-farm practices is critical. This will help foster adoption with technologies that are scalable and proven in the field.

The potential return on investment in agriculture is staggering; research by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences shows that every dollar invested in agricultural R&D generates an almost eight-dollar return for farmers over 10 years.

Having worked in crop production my entire career, I've witnessed how investment in plant science innovation and new technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), can transform the sector's productivity and competitiveness. Plant breeding innovations and crop protection products help Canadian farmers grow more on existing land, while AI can unlock enormous amounts of information to help growers make smarter crop choices and protect their fields.

In 2023, Farm Credit Canada (FCC) published a report that shows that this country's crop productivity growth peaked in the 2000s at an annual average rate of 2.9 per cent, but has since fallen to one per cent, with the decline projected to continue. This isn't just a statistic—it represents a direct threat to our food security, export potential, and economic prosperity. At the time of the report, FCC's chief economist, J.P. Gervais, said: "Developing innovative solutions, adopting new technology, and leveraging data and insights can boost productivity growth and pay off in a big way for Canadian farms."

Canadian growers are doing their part—they've long been at the forefront of technology adoption. The government should recognize agriculture and agri-food as the strategic sector it truly is by implementing a comprehensive strategy with three elements: fostering an attractive environment for private investment, streamlining regulatory processes to accelerate innovation access, and creating agriculture-specific tax incentives for R&D investment.

I urge policymakers to make agriculture and agri-food a cornerstone of Canada's economic strategy. Now is the time for bold thinking and swift action.

Trevor Heck is president of Syngenta Canada.

The Hill Times


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INNOVATION Policy Briefing

AI presents potential, and aspects that should give us pause

Complex technologies—whether AI or the next frontier in defence research, climate change, or cancer—require support from social sciences and humanities to explain the new technology according to the social and ethical norms by which we live.

Rhonda Moore

Opinion

On Oct. 8, *The Weekly Show* podcast dropped a 100-minute episode with guest Dr. Geoff Hinton, University of Toronto Professor Emeritus and the "godfather" of AI. In the episode, Hinton uses plain language to explain what AI is, how it works (with helpful analogies), the potential it presents, and the aspects that should give us pause.

Indeed, if you aren't sure what AI is or what all the fuss is about, the episode is worth your time. If that is you, don't worry, you're not alone. An August 2025 poll by Leger finds that Canadians are divided on this topic; thirty-four percent of Canadians say AI is good for society, 36 per cent believe its harmful, and 31 per cent are unsure. Yet, 85 per cent want AI to be regulated by government to ensure safe and ethical use.

The ethical concerns and considerations of AI is something Hinton and host Jon Stewart discuss at length in the podcast. In the interview, Hinton admits that he didn't think about the ethical considerations until "it was far too late." The fault is not Hinton's, but a byproduct of how we fund research in Canada.

In Canada, much academic research is funded through one of three federal research-granting agencies. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research funds research in medicine and health. The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) funds research that advances our understanding of the natural world (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics), engineering, and maths. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funds work that helps us better understand how people think and act individually (e.g., psychology, sociology), in groups (e.g., anthropology, political science), how we motivate each other (e.g., behavioural psychology, economics) and our expressions of culture (also known as the humanities, e.g., literature, philosophy, and religion).

Researchers may seek funds from different granting agencies separately to collaborate, but there are no mechanisms that require an NSERC-funded researcher (like Hinton) to partner with someone who can help him think through the social and ethical dimensions and concerns of his work. Nor would the funds he receives from NSERC allow him to hire someone for this purpose.

The real world is not organized by narrow disciplines. It's time we stopped funding research that way. Complex technologies—whether AI or the next frontier in defence research, climate change, or cancer—require support from social sciences and humanities to explain the new technology according to the social and ethical norms by which we live. That we fail to do so forces us to experience Collingridge's dilemma each time we adopt a new technology. (Collingridge's dilemma is the idea that when a technology is in its early stages, it is considered easy to control because its full impact is not yet understood. When the full impact becomes clear, the technology has become too widely adopted to be easily altered or regulated.) Indeed, it is the absence of social and ethical considerations explored in tandem with the development of a technology that prevent us from considering and understanding its full impact and so we struggle—or fail—to effectively regulate its use.

Experimental governance offers a solution. Through early, continuous collaboration among stakeholders, the full range of societal risk may be explored. Such an approach can foster transparency, trust, and co-develop accountability structures. A proactive approach also presents an opportunity to start with what is possible and work towards what is desirable; the AI tools and resources Canadians deserve.

The Science Writers and Communicators of Canada (SWCC), like many professions, have concerns about the social and ethical implications of AI, and are ready to be a part of the solution. In March 2025, the SWCC polled its members—science writers, science communicators, and science journalists—about the use of generative AI. The survey findings demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the potential, and the threats, that generative AI presents for these professions. In response, the SWCC has developed a series of guidelines for the ethical use of generative AI, freely available on their web site. As to what Canadians deserve? To start, accurate information about evolving AI capabilities, risks, and best practices.

Rhonda Moore is executive director, science and innovation at the Institute on Governance, and past president of the Science Writers and Communicators of Canada.

The Hill Times

Carpe Momentum: why Canada's future depends on its entrepreneurs

If we invest in this generation's builders, from classrooms to companies, our prosperity agenda will not just imagine a better future, but build it.

Guy Levesque

Opinion

If there was ever a moment for Canada to act, it's now.

Innovation, commercialization, procurement—these generational challenges have long resisted meaningful progress, despite successive efforts. It is imperative we address these persistent performance gaps.

A coherent *prosperity agenda* can get us there—one that, in the words of Robert Asselin, CEO of the U15, connects *productive capacity* to *production capability* to leverage the full potential of our economy. Foundational to this agenda are entrepreneurs—the builders, risk-takers, and changemakers who turn ideas into impact.

The 2023 BDC report highlighted a staggering decline in the number of entrepreneurs in Canada over the past generation. A recent study by the Leaders Fund further underscores this, revealing an increasing number of Canadian founders choosing to establish high-potential companies abroad. Rebuilding our entrepreneurial base is central to any plan to build Canada's strong future.

Culture

Last year, I wrote that Canada's entrepreneurial mindset begins with its students. Cultivating that mindset requires us to ignite, inspire, empower and equip learners—from primary through post-secondary—with the skills, tools, and confidence to create meaningful change in the world around them. These are the changemakers who will drive social and economic prosperity for Canada, from within Canada.

In a recent conversation with *The Hub*'s Sean Speer, Shopify President Harley Finkelstein urged Canada to become a "founder nation," beginning by "embedding entrepreneurship education in the school system from elementary grades forward." A needed call to action—one that builds the productive capacity our future demands.

At the University of Calgary, we've embraced that vision. The Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking is leading efforts to embed entrepreneurial skills and confidence across disciplines, empowering students, researchers, and alumni to turn ideas into impact.

Conviction

A prosperity agenda must also address the fundamentals of discovering, creating, building, and scaling within Canada. This includes safeguarding intellectual property rights, fostering a culture of calculated risk-taking, celebrating entrepreneurial resilience, and strengthening early- and growth-stage capital investment.

These measures ensure that entrepreneurs can build and scale their ventures with confidence, knowing they are supported by an enabling ecosystem. But conviction alone isn't enough; entrepreneurs thrive in connected, collaborative communities.

Community

The entrepreneurial journey can be challenging and, at times, isolating. Nurturing entrepreneurial communities is essential to building a strong Canada.

Organizations like the Council of Canadian Innovators, StartUp Canada and NEXTCanada play a critical role in supporting entrepreneurial communities.

Celebrating entrepreneurial achievements, highlighted in *Maclean's* September 2025 feature "New Nation Makers," exemplify this effort. In the Innovators category, Sasha Ivanov, founder of Maple Scan and Hunter Hub alum, is recognized for designing an app that helps Canadians learn about a product's Canadian ties and shop local. Fostering a sense of belonging and cultivating a vibrant entrepreneurial community strengthens the foundation of our prosperity agenda.

My role at the University of Calgary, "Canada's Entrepreneurial University," as part of the Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking team fires my passion for this work.

Established in 2017 through a transformational $40-million gift from the Hunter Family Foundation, the Hub has enabled thousands of students, faculty, and alumni to pursue entrepreneurial journeys wherever they lead.

Calgary is emerging as a world-class entrepreneurship center. The city boasts North America's fastest-growing tech sector, is in the top 50 emerging startup ecosystems globally, and is fourth in venture capital deals in Canada. UCalgary is the top university startup creator over the past six years. Calgary-based ventures nabbed top spots on Fastest Growing Companies lists (2024 Deloitte, 2025 *The Globe and Mail*). Even the City of Calgary has its own $60-million Opportunities Fund to fuel local prosperity.

At the Hunter Hub—the university's entrepreneurial epicentre—our strength lies in our culture, our confidence, and our community—the very foundations of a prosperity agenda.

Most recently, the Hunter Hub hosted the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers conference, welcoming more than 560 leaders from 200 institutions across 20 countries—only the second time in nearly 30 years the conference has been held in Canada.

Calgary has earned its place as a global center of entrepreneurial excellence. Canada has the talent, creativity, and resilience to lead the world. If we invest in this generation's builders, from classrooms to companies, our prosperity agenda will not just imagine a better future, but build it. Carpe momentum.

Guy Levesque is the executive director for Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking with the University of Calgary.

The Hill Times


Canada's freshwater future is on the line.
The proposed WATER TECH SECURITY FUND would catalyze Canadian companies to capture
2–3% of a
$600 billion
global water tech market, while protecting our most precious resource for future generations.
From coast to coast, our lakes and rivers face mounting threats, from pollution to climate change. But a new generation of innovators is stepping up.
AQUA ACTION
Help us
support the next wave of water tech innovators.

INNOVATION Policy Briefing

Decades of investments in home-grown research will help Canada solve its biggest challenges, but we can still do better

Now is the time to think big and act boldly, and research and innovation will be a key part of how Canada enacts change.

Sylvain Charbonneau

Opinion

Canada is having a moment. Our world is shifting under the strain of turbulent geopolitics, an altered climate, and a shaky economy, and at the same time we have ambitious plans to address some of the country's thorniest problems, from affordable housing to food security to defence.

Now is the time to think big and act boldly, and research and innovation will be a key part of how Canada enacts change.

Luckily, our world-class research ecosystem puts us in good shape to respond with the technological solutions and insights we need. That's thanks to the strategic focus of the federal research funding agencies, and the remarkable contributions of hundreds of research institutions across the country, as well as multiple other players who contribute to the innovation vision for Canada.

But it's also thanks in part to decades of federal funding for research infrastructure at universities, colleges and research hospitals across the country, to the tune of more than $11-billion, through the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

Research infrastructure includes critical tools like next-generation DNA sequencers, high-powered microscopes or advanced computers. It also includes whole facilities, like the University of Saskatchewan's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization's (VIDO's) containment level 4 lab, or the University of Victoria's Ocean Networks Canada (OCN), a network of observatories operating along Canada's Arctic, Pacific, and Atlantic coasts.

We're less than 30 years old, and we've funded more than 13,000 research infrastructure projects and counting. Researchers simply can't do their important work without the labs and equipment we provide, so our role is a critical one. Having a funding organization devoted to building long-lasting research capacity through investments in research infrastructure is unique in Canada and the envy of many of our international counterparts.

Our funding model is also unique, and a proven success for engaging partners across sectors and levels of government. That's because the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) typically funds up to 40 per cent of the capital costs of a research infrastructure project, and the research institutions leverage the rest from the provinces and other partners, including in the private sector.

Since our inception in 1997, we've been nimble and ready to respond to this country's needs, just as we did during the pandemic when we quickly launched a new funding program to upgrade Canada's capabilities in biosciences and infectious disease research.

So, we're doing our part to make sure Canadian research is keeping pace with the times and addressing the country's priorities. But our research and innovation system is not perfect, and the void between the world-class research we have a reputation for and the road to commercialization remains. For decades, we've been great at producing research of the highest quality, but to move the needle on Canadian research, we need to figure out how to more effectively engage the private sector.

At the CFI, we've taken a few measures to make that happen. In the most recent funding competition of our flagship program, we invited proposals for core facilities. These are research facilities on university campuses that house multiple research tools and serve researchers from across disciplines. They're a godsend for small businesses and startups who need a single research and development hub to help them through the critical phases of development, prototyping and testing that ultimately lead to commercialization.

We're also preparing to implement a framework for funding Major Research Facilities in Canada, which are very large in scale and highly complex. These include VIDO and ONC, for example. These engines of productivity provide research services to businesses and have an extraordinary capacity for generating spin-off companies and new technologies.

And we also operate the Research Facilities Navigator, which lists more than 850 labs across Canada in a convenient directory to help businesses find the R&D support they need.

But clearly, this is not enough. We need to do better and work together—in all sectors—toward a shared, predictable vision for research in Canada. Only then can we truly claim to be among the best in the world for innovation. The CFI has the track-record and expertise to help lead the charge.

Sylvain Charbonneau is president and CEO of the Canada Foundation for Innovation, a non-profit corporation that invests in research infrastructure at Canadian universities, colleges and research hospitals.

The Hill Times

From droughts to defence: Canada's water tech wake-up call

Water security is national security. Let's not wait for the next drought, the next border dispute, or the next global crisis to prove the point.

Oliver Anderson

Opinion

Picture this: It's 2030. A Canadian naval vessel docks in a drought-stricken ally's port, not just with humanitarian aid, but also with compact desalination units, AI-enabled sensors that detect contamination in real time, and smart irrigation systems that coax crops from arid soil. This isn't science fiction. Canada's military already deploys portable reverse-osmosis water filtration systems to disaster zones that can turn fetid bogs into safe drinking water. But that's just a taste of the future Canada can lead if we act boldly on water tech today.

To its credit, the federal government appears attuned to the shifting tides of a water-scarce world. During the last election campaign, Prime Minister Mark Carney tacitly acknowledged mounting pressures from United States President Donald Trump over shared water resources. The announcement of a National Water Security Strategy and a $100-million water security technology fund were welcome signals that Ottawa recognizes water is no longer just a resource, but a strategic asset, a defence imperative, and an economic engine.

These three dimensions—sovereignty, security, and industrial strength—give depth and clarity to this country's renewed focus on water. Despite holding 20 per cent of the world's freshwater, Canada has been slow to treat it as a strategic resource, vulnerable to continental competition. In 2024, the U.S. director of national intelligence classified global water scarcity as a national security risk. NATO followed suit, identifying water infrastructure as a strategic vulnerability. Canada must respond in lockstep.

The risks are real. This year, Trump cut off Tijuana's access to the Colorado River, affecting nearly two million residents, in retaliation for Mexico's water debt. Accusations of "water theft" and threats of further cutoffs have escalated tensions. Canada cannot be naive. A national water security framework would help us anticipate cross-border disputes, maintain control over our freshwater assets, and assert our sovereignty amid foreign pressures and environmental instability.

Water is also increasingly a driver of global conflict. Drought-driven crop failures have fueled civil unrest in Sudan, the Middle East, and beyond. Compact water purification systems, AI-enabled monitoring, and atmospheric water extraction technologies are already being piloted by our allies. These innovations can prevent the kind of logistical nightmares that led to 12 per cent of marine casualties during the Iraq War due to vulnerable water and fuel supply lines. In these regions—and in future theatres of conflict—Canadian water tech can be a force multiplier.

Canadian firms are already stepping up. Ottawa-based BluMetric Environmental is designing portable purification units for soldiers in forward positions. Cann Forecast is using AI and machine learning to optimize water systems. These technologies can be tested on Canadian Forces bases, deployed on naval vessels, and shared with NATO allies, strengthening this country's credibility as it ramps up defence spending toward the two-per-cent GDP target.

But we're behind the eight ball. In the U.S., both Republicans and Democrats have acted: the Inflation Reduction Act, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the bipartisan 2025 Energy-Water Bill have mobilized tens of billions of dollars in support for water technologies. Canada, by contrast, has no dedicated water tech incentives. Our innovators rely on narrowly-defined low-carbon investment tax credits that don't explicitly address water security.

Thankfully, philanthropic and private investors are already moving. A recent survey of 300 senior business leaders showed near-unanimous agreement that water will be fundamental to economic security and sustainable development. The global water market is expected to nearly double over the next decade. While government support has been key to catalyzing the investments in Canada leading to our No. 2 placement on the Global Cleantech Innovation Index, we remain woefully behind in the field of water tech. Federal and provincial governments urgently need to explore philanthropic leveraging opportunities to link both water tech and watershed protection priorities.

Thankfully, Canada's water tech sector is brimming with untapped potential. That missing bit of leadership from a National Water Security Strategy will go a long way to build a pipeline of talent. And, having just created a new federal Canada Water Agency, the federal government is ideally situated to leverage the promised $100-million water tech fund to catalyze private investment.

Water security is national security. Let's not wait for the next drought, the next border dispute, or the next global crisis to prove the point. Let's invest in water tech and secure our most precious resource, drop by drop.

Oliver Anderson is vice-president of communications and growth at AquaAction, a charity dedicated to building a water secure future. He previously served as the director of communications to the federal minister of environment and climate change.

The Hill Times

AbbVie: Contributing to Canada's Growth as a **Global Leader in Life Sciences**

The life sciences sector is growing in Canada and AbbVie is honoured to contribute to Canada's thriving scientific research and innovation community. As a leading global research-based pharmaceutical company, and one of the largest biopharmaceutical organizations in Canada, our Montreal and Markham offices teams along with our colleagues across Canada are dedicated to developing and delivering medicines that address both current and future health challenges. We focus on key therapeutic areas—including immunology, oncology, neuroscience, eye care, virology, gastroenterology and aesthetics—where our expertise allows us to support improvements in disease management.

AbbVie's commitment extends to Canada's life sciences ecosystem through investments in education, innovation and collaboration. In 2024, we introduced the AbbVie Biotech Innovators Award, collaborating with SpinUp, the University of Toronto's life sciences accelerator. The award offers the early-stage biotech recipient with a year of laboratory space, mentorship, and access to essential research resources.

In 2022, AbbVie played a key role in establishing the AbbVie Chair of Ethnodermatology at the University of Toronto's Temerty Faculty of Medicine through a significant contribution. This position is notable for being among the first of its kind globally and underscores AbbVie's commitment to promoting diversity and advancing research excellence in dermatology.

From drug discovery to clinical trials, AbbVie is pursuing new ways to address patients' most challenging health issues. Through significant investments in clinical research, AbbVie has established 586 Canadian trial sites that have enrolled nearly 5,800 patients. Strategic collaborations with AbCellera, to leverage its antibody discovery and development platform, and with Ripple, to leverage its innovative drug delivery platform to develop next-generation therapies for glaucoma management, further exemplify AbbVie's commitment to collaboration and innovation.

Through a long-standing partnership with Crohn's and Colitis Canada, AbbVie empowers people living with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis with an annual scholarship program. Since 2012, more than 180 post-secondary students have been awarded bursaries, encouraging them to take charge of their health while easing the financial burden so they can focus on their studies and future success.

"At AbbVie, we value our role in strengthening Canada's position as a global leader in life sciences. We recognize the significant potential within Canadian research and healthcare and remain dedicated to ongoing collaboration and discovery for the benefit of patients," **Rami Fayed, Vice President and General Manager, AbbVie, Canada**.

We care about making a lasting, meaningful difference for Canadians—today and for future generations—through our pursuit of scientific breakthroughs and the collaborative approaches we take to achieve them.

INNOVATION Policy Briefing

Let’s go on the offensive and score

The evidence is clear: one-size-fits-all programs no longer work. Government support must be tailored to firms’ actual needs, with measurable objectives and transparent results.

Catherine Beaudry

Opinion

Business and hockey share the same playbook: innovation, agility, and speed. If we want to keep our talent, intellectual property, firms, and revenues here at home, Canada needs to move from defending to scoring.

The second quarter of 2025 saw a drop in both GDP and labour productivity. My recent study for the C.D. Howe Institute highlights one way to turn that around: help Canadian firms transform ideas into valuable intellectual property (IP) and products by removing the barriers that block innovation.

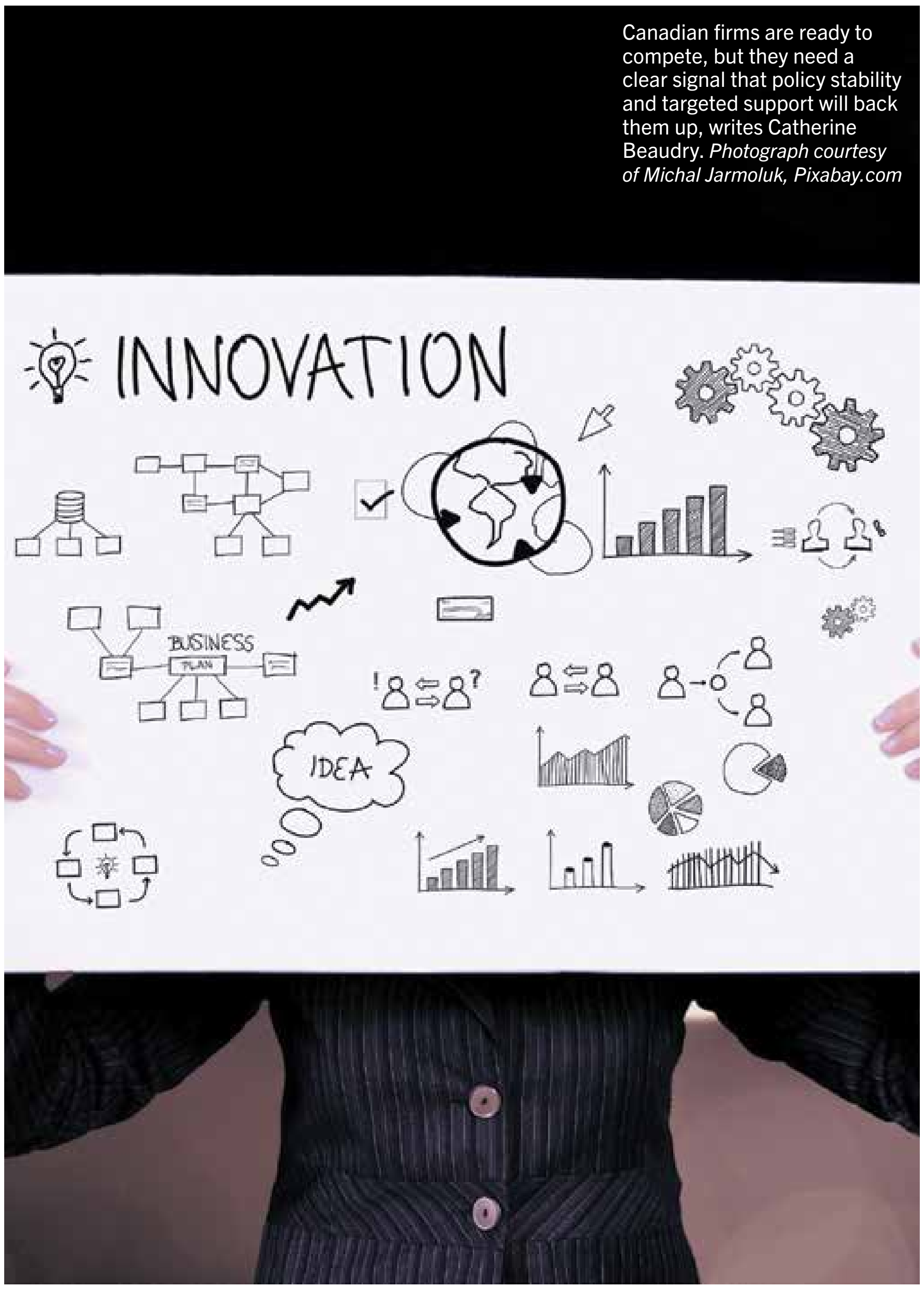
Faced with uncertainty and fears of not having the necessary support to move into the offensive zone, our businesses have stopped investing in innovation. At the same time, government staff numbers and programmes are being cut, thereby maintaining this uncertainty. We eagerly await the Nov. 4 budget!

Canadian firms are ready to compete, but they need a clear signal that policy stability and targeted support will back them up. In times of fiscal constraint, companies that take deliberate steps to overcome innovation barriers—and that make effective use of available programs—are significantly more likely to innovate than those that stand still. Doing nothing is the surest way to lose ground.

The evidence is clear: one-size-fits-all programs no longer work. Government support must be tailored to firms’ actual needs, with measurable objectives and transparent results. Programs that focus on training and hiring recent graduates are particularly effective, boosting both innovation capacity and youth employment (which is currently showing a worrying trend). Ensuring access to public research infrastructure—labs, testing facilities, and collaboration platforms—has a similar impact, helping firms develop and retain Canadian IP instead of seeking partnerships abroad.

Export supports also matter, but the rules of global trade are changing. Canada should double down on diversifying markets through “friendshoring”—building supply chains with trusted partners who share our values. That shift will help our innovators reach new customers while reducing exposure to geopolitical risk.

Strong policy design depends on strong data. Yet, as ministries reduce analytical capacity, we risk cutting programs without understanding their true impact.



Canadian firms are ready to compete, but they need a clear signal that policy stability and targeted support will back them up, writes Catherine Beaudry. *Photograph courtesy of Michal Jarmoluk, Pixabay.com*

Evidence-based innovation policy requires the opposite approach: collecting more and better data on what works. Without measurement, we’re skating blind.

Hockey analysts explore all aspects of the game and the performance of different players with increasingly sophisticated statistics and analytical tools, including artificial intelligence. Similarly, both firms and governments require official statistics, validated data and new tools to adjust innovation and industrial policy, as well as innovation and growth support mechanisms. The Canadian Statistics Advisory Council’s latest report to Innovation Minister Mélanie Joly clearly paves the way for a new game plan in this regard.

Governments create the conditions for play, but companies score the goals. Firms should not wait for signals to invest, protect their IP, or recruit and retain talent. They need stability and predictability in their home zone to take calculated risks. Defensemen rarely score, it is not their role, but often assist the lead trio for that purpose.

Finally, firms should resist the temptation to absorb tariff costs by lowering prices. Competing on price is short-sighted; competing on innovation builds enduring strength.

Canada has produced legends known for their creativity and speed—the Rocket, the Great One and the Blonde Comet. We can channel that same drive into our innovation economy. If we invest in our talent, safeguard our IP, and back our firms with smart, stable policy, Canada can get back on the scoreboard. It’s time to go on the offensive.

Catherine Beaudry is a fellow-in-residence at the C.D. Howe Institute, and professor and Canada Research Chair at Polytechnique Montréal.

The Hill Times

Turning innovation into impact: Canada's biotech advantage

Canada continues to struggle at turning research strength into economic growth. For a country with world-class science, this gap is more than a statistic, it's a signal of both risk, and opportunity.

Wendy Zatylny

Opinion

Canada has long worn a badge of innovation proudly. For decades, we've brought healing therapies and new technologies to the world—insulin, avionics, gene editing—and, as seen most recently with the Nobel prize in Economics, novel ways to understand economic and industrial growth.

So it is with some degree of worry that we receive the news that Canada has slipped three spots in the 2025 Global Innovation Index, now ranking 17th worldwide. While we rank 13th in innovation inputs (down from 8th last year), we remain stuck at 20th in outputs, proof that this country continues to struggle at turning research strength into economic growth. For a nation with world-class science, this gap is more than a statistic. It's a signal of both risk, and opportunity.

How do we solve this problem?

Biotechnology is one sector where Canada can close that gap. Canadian-led innovations are changing the way we treat disease, grow our economy, and protect our sovereignty—and the potential to do more is massive. Canada has the science and the talent to lead, but lasting leadership depends on the choices we make now. In today's uncertain and competitive landscape, biotechnology is our strategic edge.

That edge is visible in every region. In British Columbia, Aspect Biosystems' partnership with Novo Nordisk, AbCellera's collaboration with AbbVie, and Variational AI's collaboration with Merck showcase global pharma confidence in Canadian science. Entos is building a biomanufacturing hub, while Saskatchewan's VIDO leads globally in vaccines and infectious disease.

Ontario's Fusion Pharmaceuticals' \$2.8-billion acquisition by AstraZeneca strengthened our radiopharmaceutical capacity, and Moderna is producing its first Canadian mRNA vaccines in Quebec. In Atlantic Canada, Pegasus Biotech is developing a broad-spectrum influenza vaccine through a United Kingdom-Canada consortium, and BIOVECTRA's \$1.25-billion sale shows Canadian innovation can scale globally while keeping expertise at home.

These milestones—supported by more than \$30-billion invested in Canadian life sciences in recent years—reflect a sector that holds tremendous capacity for creating value and economic growth. But momentum isn't enough. Without action, Canada's scientific strengths will never reach their full potential. To turn discovery into leadership, Canada must act on two fronts: investment and regulatory modernization.

Closing the commercialization gap

Canadian biotech firms excel at discovery, but struggle to secure the capital to grow. Sustained growth requires consistent access to venture capital, non-dilutive funding, and competitive tax policy. Three practical steps would make an immediate difference:

- **Unlock private capital:** Create a \$350-million Life Sciences Venture Capital Catalyst Initiative to unlock \$1-billion in total investment, matched two-to-one with private capital.
- **Expand non-dilutive funding:** Strengthen tools like Health Emergency Readiness Canada and the Industrial Research Assistance Program to support early-stage growth, commercialization, and scale-up.
- **Modernize tax policy:** Expand eligibility for the Scientific Research and Experimental Development tax credit, and implement a Patent Box, proven tools already used by other countries to anchor IP, attract investment, and reward companies

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INNOVATION Policy Briefing

Innovation for a public purpose

Unfortunately, Canadian governments have focused too much on subsidizing technology 'creation' by a few firms, instead of widespread technology 'adoption' by all firms. To improve Canadian productivity we need to pivot and support widespread technology adoption.

David Watters

Opinion

The idea of innovation can be difficult to understand. Fortunately, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has been studying and measuring innovation for several decades and has fixed on a common definition, which OECD countries use, including Canada.

"An innovation is a new or improved product or process (or combination thereof) that differs significantly from the unit's previous products or processes and that has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process)," according to the OECD.

There are several important public policy consequences that follow from this definition.

First, while products are defined as both "goods" and "services," most federal innovation support has focused on innovating new manufactured "goods" that are patentable and based on research from the natural sciences (physics, chemistry, biology etc.). But Canada's manufacturing sector is only nine per cent of the total, while the service sector is now about 75 per cent of the economy, according to Statistics Canada. This is important because SR&ED, Canada's largest innovation support program, providing $4.5-billion annually in tax credits—targets R&D in the natural sciences and in engineering to produce new goods—and explicitly excludes research in the "social sciences." However, these disciplines, including economics, psychology, sociology, education, law, and management, are fundamental areas of research to grow our service sector. No wonder Canada has a productivity problem.

Since public money is being used by governments to support innovation, its effectiveness should be measured by the public benefits that it provides to citizens, in order to improve their quality of life. That's why all federal support for innovation should be designed to serve a clear public purpose, writes David Watters. *Image courtesy of Pexels.com*

Second, note that the term "unit" to describe the people who innovate refers very broadly to all stakeholders in society. This is important because federal innovation policy has focused almost exclusively on the activity of "firms." But as the OECD makes clear, any public or private organization, and any household or individual can innovate. As a result, innovation should not be limited just to industries—but rather it is everyone's opportunity, whether also in governments, small businesses, hospitals, non-profits, communities, or individuals. In summary, innovation is simply about trying to improve the performance of any human activity, and, collectively, innovation is the history of our civilization.

Third, to be considered an innovation, "it needs to be implemented." This means it needs to be used broadly in order to generate value. For example, the value of the new COVID-19 vaccines depended on their being used—by vaccinating billions of people to produce health benefits. But how can governments increase the widespread use of important new goods or services?

Here are three steps to expand innovation use and diffusion:

1. Increase public knowledge of the benefits produced by an important new good or service.

2. Increase accessibility and affordability of the new good or service.

3. Manage and regulate production and use of the new good or service to protect the public interest.

Fourth, innovation is not limited to creating a good, service, or process that is new to the world. To improve performance and value, an innovation only has to be new to the organization, household or individual. So the adoption of a new technology by Firm A, even if it was created by Firm B, is still regarded as an innovation. And this makes sense because if I, as Firm A, buy a computer system, software or AI app made by another firm, it will still be new to my operations, and will likely improve my performance and productivity. Unfortunately, Canadian governments have focused too much on subsidizing technology "creation" by a few firms, instead of widespread technology "adoption" by all firms. To improve Canadian productivity we need to pivot and support widespread technology adoption.

In summary, innovative goods and services can result in broad public benefits if widely diffused throughout a society. These public benefits go well beyond the benefits that accrue to the few private-sector firms that create these technologies. Unfortunately, federal innovation policy and program support has focused primarily on subsidizing the producers of new technologies, and not enough on supporting the widespread adoption of new technologies.

Therefore, since public money is being used by governments to support innovation, its effectiveness should be measured by the public benefits that it provides to citizens, in order to improve their quality of life.

That is why all federal support for innovation should be designed to serve a clear public purpose.

David Watters is a former assistant deputy minister for economic development and corporate finance in the Department of Finance, the founder and former CEO of the Global Advantage Consulting Group, and the founder and current president of the not-for-profit Institute for Collaborative Innovation.

The Hill Times

Women entrepreneurs are a vital resource for growing Canada's economy—it is time to break down the barriers standing in their way

Eliminating barriers begins with recognizing the vital role that women—whether entrepreneurs, self-employed, employees or unpaid caregivers—play in Canada's economic health. Without adequate supports for women and children, Canada's economy will not thrive.

Rosalind Lockyer

Opinion

As the federal government looks to use every tool at its disposal to reshape and strengthen the Canadian economy, it must not overlook one of its chief assets: women entrepreneurs.

Their ingenuity, perseverance, and know-how can help drive the economy forward.

However, barriers prevent them from realizing their full potential. Through the right combination of policies and investments, the federal government can unleash the full economic power of women entrepreneurs to build a more robust economy.

Women entrepreneurs employ over 1.5-million Canadians, and contribute more than $150-billion annually to this country's economy even though majority-owned women businesses account for only 19.5 per cent of all private-sector firms in the country.

Moving up the dial even a few notches to 25 per cent could add another $150-billion to Canada's gross domestic product, create jobs, and help propel inclusive growth throughout Canada. But this will require removing the obstacles standing in their way.

Like other business owners, women entrepreneurs are grappling with tariffs, interest rates, supply-chain issues, and global economic uncertainty. While the federal government is tackling these macro economic problems, solving them alone will not eliminate all of the barriers that impede women's entrepreneurial success.

The government must also break down systemic financial and social barriers.

Because they generally have smaller businesses with lower revenues than their male counterparts, women entrepreneurs often find it difficult to get credit or qualify for loans through financial institutions.

A 2023 study from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business showed that over half of women entrepreneurs face hurdles when trying to obtain financing for their business and that, compared to men in similar roles, their applications are more often rejected.

Rosalind Lockyer writes that strengthening support for women entrepreneurs would include permanent and multi-year funding by the federal government to stabilize and strengthen the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy and Department for Women and Gender Equality, currently being led by Minister Rechie Valdez, pictured. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

When women entrepreneurs do get funding, they often receive significantly less—on average about 150 per cent less—than men-owned businesses.

Women entrepreneurs also report more difficulty than men in finding, applying for, and qualifying for government support programs.

Despite progress on women's equality, social barriers remain. At home, women still do the bulk of the housework, childcare and eldercare. This often forces women entrepreneurs to put their business on the backburner to tend to family responsibilities.

These challenges, combined with a lack of networking and training programs, make it difficult for female entrepreneurs to expand their businesses.

The problems are even more pronounced for those who are Indigenous, racialized, recent immigrants, 2SLGBTQ+, living with disabilities, single parents, or who live in rural, northern or other underserviced communities.

Eliminating the barriers begins with recognizing the vital role that women—whether entrepreneurs, self-employed, employees or unpaid caregivers—play in Canada's economic health.

Without adequate supports for women and children, our economy will not thrive.

Women have shown time and time again that they will step up to help in times of crises.

During the Second World War, women flowed into factories and other essential jobs, keeping Canada's war economy running.

More recently, women were front and centre at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic—working as nurses and caregivers, as well as public health, business and community leaders—helping to guide the country through a perilous time.

Now, as the federal government works to steer the economy through volatile global political and economic headwinds, it again needs all hands on deck.

Women entrepreneurs have the skills to lead. The federal government can leverage their talents to reshape and grow the Canadian economy by better supporting them.

PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise Canada is currently holding cross-country roundtable discussions—including in Whitehorse, Yukon; Vancouver, B.C.; Calgary, Alta.; Toronto, Ont.; Ottawa and St. John's, N.L.—with women entrepreneurs and solopreneurs (self-employed individuals) to find solutions to fuel business growth.

From these meetings and other research, we will be issuing an updated report on women entrepreneurship in Canada.

So far, our work has identified several key measures that the federal government should take.

It must commit to permanent, multi-year funding to stabilize and strengthen its Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, and the Department for Women and Gender Equality.

It must also provide increased loan capital for the Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada's National Loan Program to meet the needs of women entrepreneurs, especially for solopreneurs and early-start businesses.

Additionally, the government must invest in targeted programs and flexible supports to bolster Canada's care economy and address eldercare responsibilities—recognizing that without adequate supports for children and elders, women entrepreneurs cannot succeed.

Other needed actions include expanding inclusive lending, creating a federal loan-loss reserve for women entrepreneurs, providing micro-grants to promote digital adoption, piloting supplier diversity targets, and increasing support for training and trade missions.

Investing in women entrepreneurs is an investment in this country's economy. It is time for the federal government to take action to unlock their full potential.

Rosalind Lockyer is founder and CEO of PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise-Ontario, PARO Canada and board member for Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada.

The Hill Times

As Canada feels the strain of U.S. trade war, pressure heats up on innovation sector

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business" in order to promote economic growth.

"We are doing nothing to have value-added and more productive and higher productivity in Canada. Instead, we are completely obsessed on selling unsophisticated resources that we dig or cut, and selling them to the U.S. and other countries so they can do something with it, and then we buy them for a much higher price. This is not the game I want to play if I was a prime minister," he said.

Using the biofuels sector as an example, Breznitz said that Canada shouldn't just be selling biofuels, and instead must be where the latest R&D on biofuel is happening. Brezntiz likewise emphasized the importance of R&D in other sectors including for critical minerals.

"It's not just [about] adopt[ing] innovation because, again, if you just adopt innovation, you will pay to the people who own them," he said.

"I want this to be not just the place where they mine, but the place where we develop … the best mining equipment technologies … and then we sell both our minerals and the mining equipment and the knowledge of how to use that, which is much more important than just selling pieces of rock."

Innovation is a process, not a sector

Tijs Creutzberg, president and CEO of the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA), told *The Hill Times* that innovation should be thought of not as a sector, but as a process that applies across the economy.

"Innovation, it's about how we develop new technologies, but it's also adapting and adopting new technologies. There are two sides of that coin," he said.

"I think when it comes down to how we respond to tariffs, most definitely innovation across all sectors will be important. The challenge that companies are going to be faced with is accessing new markets and new production networks and new supply chains, and they're going to have to adapt. And to do that, they're going to have to be creative and innovate."

Creutzberg said firms don't necessarily need to be creating everything in Canada in order to thrive.

"For companies to thrive, they need to be innovating, selling new products, but also adapting and adopting new products, and that is a challenge. Both of those aspects are a challenge for Canada," he said.

Elicia Maine, associate vice-president of knowledge mobilization and innovation at Simon Fraser University, says, 'This is an opportunity to really double down on innovation in mining, in forestry, [and] in oil and gas, in ways that we haven't been pressed to do so in recent time.' *Photograph courtesy of Elicia Maine*

"It's incumbent on all sectors to be looking for new markets for their wares, and to be more competitive in global markets, and to move on from a dependency from the United States. That requires them to be cutting edge, to be competitive, to be efficient, and to be adopting the latest technologies, and to be creating new technology. It's a national endeavour across the entire economy."

Creutzberg said it will be important for Ottawa to keep in mind that innovation represents a long-term commitment that cannot be "turned on overnight."

CCA is planning to release a report next month that will look at state of science, technology, and innovation in Canada, including the challenges and the priorities.

"I think the government needs to act on this and really reflect Canada's economic diversity, and be strategic in doing so. That's what I would say at the moment," said Creutzberg.

Time to blend innovation into resource sectors: Elicia Maine

Elicia Maine, associate vice-president of knowledge mobilization and innovation at Simon Fraser University, told *The Hill Times* that science, technology, and innovation have to be linked purposefully. Maine said in order to face the economic uncertainty of tariffs, Canada could try to focus on innovations that either radically reduce costs or increase performance in resource-based sectors.

"For many years we've been able to compete in commodity markets in our resource-based sectors because we have abundant supplies of natural resources," she said.

"This is an opportunity to really double down on innovation in mining, in forestry, [and] in oil and gas, in ways that we haven't been pressed to do so in recent time."

Maine said that currently there is a chance for Canada to blend innovation more seamlessly into the country's commodity- and resource-based sectors. Maine argued this country is among the leaders in the science and the development of AI research, but has become a laggard with one of the lowest rates of AI adoption among OECD peer nations.

"I would say that if we're thinking about AI and quantum and bio manufacturing and clean energy, by all means there is more of a hope that we're going to build more anchor companies in Canada and that we are going to build our economy that way," she said.

"Things that our innovation sector should be doing, given the tariff pressure … is collaborating more internationally and diversifying our relationships [for] both our science and technology relationships, but particularly our trade relationships."

Procurement can help validate new products: David Crane

David Crane, a journalist with special interests in the economics of globalization, innovation, sustainable development and social equity, and who has served as a board member of the University of Toronto's Innovations Foundation, told *The Hill Times* that government procurement is an important component of innovation.

Industry Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.) unveiled a three-pillar industrial strategy on Oct. 9 aimed at protecting Canadian industries, creating jobs, and attracting global investment to protect Canada from the impacts of Trump's punishing tariffs. Speaking at the Canadian Club of Toronto, Joly said the government will "use the power of procurement," and leverage the "Buy Canadian" directive to source materials such as lumber and steel for major housing and defence projects, as reported in *The Hill Times*.

"Government procurement … creates a market for tech companies, and when you create it allows them to test out their new products as part of the learning curve. And it also … validates the technology when they try to sell in other countries, if the Canadian government has already been a purchaser," said Crane.

"It's very important in validating the new technology and to helping these companies grow and scale up so they're more competitive. That's one thing."

To help with innovation, Crane also said Canada needs to do a better job supporting development of new knowledge in universities and colleges, which means supporting not just the research capabilities, but supporting PhD and postdoctoral students.

"We've been very parsimonious in the funding of these people who are often in their mid- to late 20s, and may even have families to support. They need income, and so we have to be fairly supportive in supporting the researchers themselves," said Crane.

In order to diversify trade opportunities, Canada will also need products that the rest of the world wants to buy, according to Crane.

"The problem with all the branch plants that we have, and the auto industry is a good example, is that the big decisions aren't made in Canada," said Crane.

"We can't decide that we're going to export more automobiles because the decision on where the international trade takes place for Canadian auto plants is not made in Canada. And also, because branch plants, they don't deal directly with customers. One of the greatest sources of innovation is the interaction between a producer and a customer, and if the interaction between the customer and the producer doesn't take place in Canada, then you don't get that innovation push that you would normally get."

Karlee Silver, chief executive officer for Grand Challenges Canada, told *The Hill Times* that managing innovation requires managing—but not eliminating—risk.

"Canada leads all developed countries in … inciting a fear of failure as a main deterrent from pursuing entrepreneurial activities," she said.

"If you have that lens, and you're like, 'the whole system is geared towards not wanting to fail,' and doing things that are safe … that's actually going to limit our ability to take the types of bold moves that need to be done right now that will allow us to leapfrog forward."

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The Hill Times

Canada Innovation Statistics

Image courtesy of Pixabay.com

- Canada's overall R&D intensity remains well below many other countries, and in 2021, fell two spots to 19th in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). At the same time, business sector R&D spending as a share of GDP was the second lowest in the G7.
- R&D-performing businesses in Canada generated $8.9-billion from their intellectual property in 2021, up over one third from 2020, with much of the growth coming from higher receipts from software.
- The adoption of AI and other disruptive technologies is still in its early stages. The 2022 Survey of Advanced Technology found that only 3.1 per cent of businesses reported using AI, while 2.1 per cent reported using robotics. By early 2024, 6.1 per cent of businesses reported using AI for producing goods or delivering services during the previous 12 months (Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, second quarter 2024).
- In the second quarter of 2024, almost three in 10 businesses (28.3 per cent) reported that technology adoption and innovation improved their ability to operate efficiently over the previous twelve months (Canadian Survey on Business Conditions).

Source: Statistics Canada data released on July 24, 2024.

Turning innovation into impact: Canada's biotech advantage

Continued from page 27

for keeping their science and commercialization in Canada.

These measures would help Canada keep top talent, reinvest in homegrown innovation, and support companies from discovery to commercialization.

Regulatory modernization: From bottleneck to advantage

Even with capital, innovation stalls if regulation can't keep up. Persistent gaps in regulatory performance delay access to breakthrough medicines and weaken Canada's appeal as a launch market. Regulatory modernization also comes down to three essentials:

• **Timely, consistent regulation:** Health Canada must meet its ambition to be world-leading, enabling technologies from mRNA and gene editing to cell therapies, radiopharmaceuticals, and AI-powered diagnostics.

• **Aligned decision-making:** Health Canada, the Canadian Drug Agency, and the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance need coordination so patients access therapies faster. A transparent, science-based, predictable process builds trust, improves outcomes, and signals this country is innovation-ready.

Industry Minister Mélanie Joly announced on Sept. 25 that Moderna produced the first made-in-Canada doses of its COVID-19 vaccine at its new mRNA vaccine biomanufacturing facility in Laval, Que. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

• **Resourced to deliver:** Health Canada needs the capacity to meet these standards. Without it, delays undermine Canada's credibility essential to attracting global investment and bringing next-generation therapies to Canadians first.

Modernizing regulation would not only speed patient access, it would give Canada the opportunity to build a modern healthcare system powered by the best of global innovation—positioning us as a first-choice market.

The choice in front of us

Health and the economy aren't separate conversations. If Canada is serious about innovation and global leadership, we need to clear the path for investment, and a modern regulatory system.

Federal leadership, provincial strategies, and regional efforts are moving in the right direction. Industry, government, and academia play a role, and partnerships across these groups will be essential to scale companies, commercialize innovation, and anchor IP and talent here at home. Getting this right is not only about growth—it's about Canada's economic, health, and defence security, and ultimately our sovereignty. Now is the time to turn innovation into impact.

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

The Hill Times

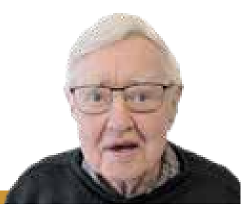
INNOVATION Policy Briefing

Can Carney ensure Canada is a true innovation nation?

While Canada has potential, the 2025 Global Innovation Report from the World Intellectual Property Organization says it lags badly on high-tech exports, creative outputs from the business sector, industrial designs, trade marks, and other forms of intellectual property, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Canada's poor performance on innovation is apparent in the World Intellectual Property Organization's 2025 Global Innovation Report which ranks our nation in 17th spot, compared to 14th a year earlier.

David Crane



Canada & the 21st Century

TORONTO—Mark Carney ran to become prime minister on the promise of delivering a strong but new economy that would generate the growth, innovation, and productivity needed to bring on good jobs and improved living standards, including more affordable housing, better infrastructure, and a sustainable environment. We were to have the strongest economy in the G7.

Canadians, in greater numbers, are now asking: when will he deliver?

Next month's budget is expected to provide the overall plan. While a start has been made with the first housing projects emerging, promises of government procurement to boost Canadian firms, the identification of potential major projects, plans for a defence-industrial strategy, efforts to build better trading relationships with partners in Europe and Asia, and a reduction in interprovincial trade barriers, we have yet to see an overall plan that puts innovation, productivity, and economic growth at its centre.

Ultimately, it's about our capacity for innovation and productivity. This makes it essential that the process of innovation is properly understood. If we needed a reminder, it came from this year's Nobel Prize in Economics. It went to three economists—one of whom, Peter Howitt, is from Canada—and as the Nobel committee said in its announcement, the starting point for the award is that "innovation and technological change are the key drivers of sustained economic growth."

The award recognized that the importance of new knowledge, and the ability to take advantage of it, has been the foundation for improved living standards since the Industrial Revolution, and that prospects for future economic growth and living standards depend on innovation and productivity. This should be the centrepiece of the Nov. 4 federal budget.

> The challenge is to 'unlock innovation's full potential' since, 'as the world economy faces mounting sustainability and growth challenges, innovation remains the most powerful tool with which to respond.'

The International Monetary Fund's just-published *World Economic Outlook* report provides a reminder of the growth challenge we face, projecting economic growth of just 1.2 per cent this year, 1.5 per cent next year, and 1.6 per cent in 2027. Such low growth rates will not deliver the jobs and productivity we need.

In a recent speech to the Canadian Club in Toronto, Industry Minister Mélanie Joly made a brave attempt to persuade her audience that the government has a plan to boost economic growth and create jobs. In what she characterized as "a very important plan"—protect, create, and attract. This means protecting existing jobs, creating new jobs and industries, and attracting foreign talent, capital and technology.

It's one thing to say, as Joly did, that the government will "fight for every single job in the auto industry," that the government will "act with audacity" to create new jobs and industries, or that the world will be eager to send us its talent and capital.

But this falls far short of a strategy to spark change, innovation, and productivity. In fact, as the Nobel economists underline, we progress through creative destruction as new technologies, new processes, and new knowledge disrupt existing industries and create new ones. Ontario, for example, may have to get used to an auto industry that plays less of a role in the province's economy, while Alberta will have to face up to the fact that oil and gas will play a shrinking role over time in its economy.

Innovation and productivity are about change: change in sources of growth, in the skills needed in the workplace, to ensure environmental sustainability, and in how we shop and work, for example. To be successful, we have to adapt to change.

Even the Bank of Canada, which until recently was not part of the innovation-productivity debate, is now worried about our future prospects. In a report last year, Bank economists painted a gloomy picture in the growth of what economists call total factor productivity (TFP)—a proxy for innovation. TFP was projected to grow below its historical rate and below the rate of the previous decade through the 2020s. But it also acknowledged that how well we succeed in boosting productivity also determines the potential growth rate of the economy—how much growth we can have without triggering a surge in inflation. It's the economy's speed limit.

In their 2025 assessment, the Bank's economists estimated potential growth—the speed limit of the economy since this is seen as the rate of growth we can pursue without triggering higher inflation—as somewhere between 0.4 per cent and 1.3 per cent next year, and between 1.0 per cent and 1.4 per cent in 2027. This implies a weak economy. "The slowdown in economic activity will worsen labour demand," the Bank's economists said.

"As a result, some workers who lose their jobs in industries that rely on trade may remain unemployed. We could see higher unemployment rates, longer periods of unemployment and, over time, depreciation of human capital—making it even more difficult for unemployed people to find a job."

Canada's poor performance on innovation is apparent in the 2025 *Global Innovation Report* from the World Intellectual Property Organization. It ranks our nation in 17th spot, compared to 14th a year earlier. While Canada has potential, the report says, it lags badly on high-tech exports, creative outputs from the business sector, industrial designs, trade marks, and other forms of intellectual property, and is one of the worst performers on productivity.

The report raises questions that are a direct challenge to the Carney government. "Economies that can adapt quickly—by embracing new technologies, supporting start-ups and strengthening linkages across sectors— are gaining ground," it said. Innovation is no longer just about science "but also about the ability to act in response to global shifts, including digital transformation and sustainability," the report continued.

The challenge is to "unlock innovation's full potential" since, "as the world economy faces mounting sustainability and growth challenges, innovation remains the most powerful tool with which to respond."

This is the challenge for Carney and Canada: how do we ensure that Canada is a true innovation nation?

David Crane can be freached at crane@interlog.com.

The Hill Times

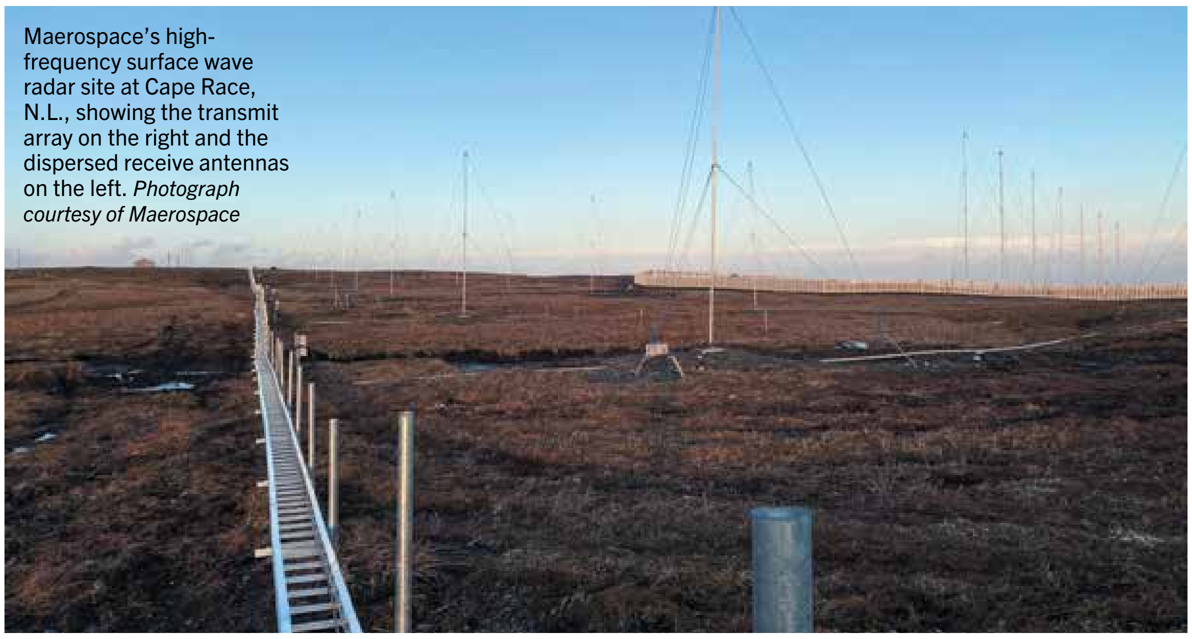
OPINION

Canada's underutilized Arctic radar advantage

Though not the primary argument, cost matters. High Frequency Surface Wave Radar delivers wide-area coverage at a fraction of the expense of aircraft patrols, with minimal personnel needs, remote operation, and long service life.

Pierre Leblanc

Opinion



Maerospace's high-frequency surface wave radar site at Cape Race, N.L., showing the transmit array on the right and the dispersed receive antennas on the left. *Photograph courtesy of Maerospace*

Canada is entering a period of accelerated defence investment. The new federal government has committed to NATO spending benchmarks, and operational commanders must deliver tangible capabilities quickly. Nowhere is the gap more visible than in the Arctic, where maritime awareness remains fragile despite its centrality to sovereignty, security, and alliance credibility.

The threat posed by Russia, China, and the weakening of the rules-based order highlight the urgency of deploying sensing capabilities in the region—capabilities that can offer persistent maritime awareness beyond the line-of-sight, complementing patrols, and force presence.

Current radar coverage is fragmented: X-band coastal radars see only 10 to 30 nautical miles offshore, satellites provide snapshots but not continuous tracking, and the Canada–Australia Over-the-Horizon Radar (OTHR) initiative will provide northward coverage from Ontario, but is built for continental air and missile detection, not vessels threading arctic straits. Yet, Chinese and Russian icebreaker fleets make this a key area of concern for sovereign and environmental protection.

Fortunately, Canada already possesses a proven, home-grown solution: High Frequency Surface Wave Radar (HFSWR), which provides continuous monitoring of ship traffic up to 200 nautical miles (350 kilometres) offshore, in all weather—even when vessels spoof (transmission of a false location), or turn off their compulsory Automatic Identification System beacons.

Commanders face a puzzle of partial solutions:

- **X-band radars:** precise but limited to line-of-sight; impractical to cover the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- **Satellites:** valuable but constrained by revisit times, weather, and cost.
- **OTHR:** a huge investment—excellent for long-range detection of airspace, but not for monitoring surface vessels.

The result is a persistent mid-range gap—precisely where sovereignty, fisheries enforcement, shipping safety, and search and rescue depend on reliable detection.

Canada's hidden asset

Canada's HFSWR capability reflects more than three decades of investment and development, led by Raytheon Canada in close partnership with the Government of Canada. This foundation created a world-class radar technology and proved its operational maturity first at Hartlen Point, N.S., and most recently at Cape Race, N.L.

Since assuming international commercialization responsibility in 2019, Maerospace has invested a further six years in advancing the system to a fourth-generation design at the highest technology readiness level (i.e. operationally deployed): a standardized, deployable product rather than a bespoke research platform. With the acquisition of Northern Radar Incorporated—the team behind all prior Canadian HFSWR antenna subsystems—the full electronics, software, and antenna expertise now reside within one company. For the first time, Canada has under one roof the full system capability to deliver a turnkey Arctic maritime surveillance solution. At the same time, Raytheon Canada's program management and in-service support, and other strengths remain as valuable components of any Canadian deployments.

Part of Maerospace's PASE High Frequency Surface Wave Radar installation at Cape Race, N.L., showing the high-frequency transmit array that enables long-range detection beyond the horizon. *Photograph courtesy of Maerospace*

Unlike conventional radars limited to line-of-sight, HFSWR uses seawater's conductivity to bend radio waves along the ocean surface, detecting ships out to the full 200 nautical miles (350 km) of Canada's EEZ.

HFSWR complements the Australian JORN OTHR program by filling tactical gaps near Canadian shores—especially in the Arctic, where sovereignty is best exercised by tracking vessels before they enter the archipelago.

Rapid deployment pathways

The urgency of today's defence environment requires capabilities that can be fielded quickly. HFSWR is uniquely suited to meet that demand:

- **Deployment in weeks to a few months:** reactivate existing facilities like Cape Race and Hartlen Point.
- **Deployment in 12–18 months:** establish new arctic sites on current Department of National Defence (DND) facilities.
- **Scalability:** a handful of sites can cover vast approaches and direct aircraft and patrol vessels where they are most needed.

Strategic relevance for Canada

The benefits extend far beyond technology:

- **Arctic sovereignty:** Persistent surveillance is the foundation of sovereignty. Without it, presence and enforcement are reactive at best. With it, Canada can demonstrate control over Arctic waters in real time.
- **Alliance credibility:** Closing northern gaps strengthens NATO and NORAD contributions.
- **Civil-military synergy:** Alongside DND, HFSWR supports Coast Guard missions—search and rescue, fisheries, interdiction, environmental stewardship.
- **Canadian innovation:** A home-grown, ready-to-deploy solution signals sovereignty and technological leadership, while creating significant export potential as suggested by Prime Minister Mark Carney.

With strong home-country support, this technology can rapidly generate exports to aid our allies in combating their own maritime threats.

A key challenge for Canada is to exert its sovereignty in the Arctic and to ensure vessels transiting its waters do not threaten this country's safety or the environment. The entrances to the Northwest Passage on the East and West coasts are the choke points for this traffic. X-band radars with 10-30 nautical-mile range cannot fully monitor across these entrances. A small number of HFSWR systems can.

Though not the primary argument, cost matters. HFSWR delivers wide-area coverage at a fraction of the expense of aircraft patrols, with minimal personnel needs, remote operation, and long service life. In an era of rising budgets, it represents visible capability without multi-billion-dollar price tags.

Now is the time to act

Canada has made a public commitment to increase defence spending, to meet NATO obligations, and to secure the Arctic. The challenge is not whether to spend, but how to spend wisely and rapidly.

HFSWR is not a concept on a whiteboard. It is Canadian-developed, Canadian-owned, operationally proven, and available now. With existing assets ready to be deployed in weeks or months, and new Arctic installations feasible in 12–18 months, HFSWR offers Ottawa a rare opportunity: to deliver real capability in the near term, while reinforcing both sovereignty and alliance credibility.

This is not about choosing between OTHR and HFSWR. It is about building a layered radar toolkit that gives Canada the strategic depth of OTHR and the persistent sovereignty coverage of HFSWR. Together, they form a continuum of awareness from the nearshore to the continental edge.

For Canada's operational commands, Coast Guard, and policymakers, the message is clear: the technology is proven, the need is urgent, and the time to act is now.

Pierre Leblanc is a retired colonel and a former commander of the Canadian Forces in the Arctic.

The Hill Times

OPINION

Young people are not a fringe group in Canadian democracy. Nearly one in four Canadians is under 35 years old. Globally, there are 1.8 billion youth, the largest generation in history. Yet, despite our numbers, young people remain the least likely to be trusted with real decision-making authority, writes Linxi Mytkolli. *Image courtesy of Pixabay*

Youth are not a monolith: Canada's chance to lead in global democracy

With Parliament back, Canada has a chance to do more than listen, we can legislate with youth, design with youth, and rebuild trust with youth.

Linxi Mytkolli

Opinion

At three major global summits—from New Delhi to Tokyo to Montreal—I've seen first hand what Canada risks missing when youth are treated as photo-ops instead of partners.

In recent years, I've represented Canada with the Young Diplomats of Canada at two historic global gatherings: the G20 Youth 20 Summit in New Delhi, and the Democracy Youth Forum in Tokyo—the first global youth democracy gathering ever hosted by Japan. I also joined thousands of peers at the One Young World Summit in Montreal, one of the world's largest gatherings of young leaders where participants tackle global challenges alongside heads of state and Nobel laureates.

Across these forums, what struck me was not youth uniformity, but youth complexity: young people living hyphenated identities—students and caregivers, entrepreneurs and advocates, workers and organizers. That multiplicity is precisely why youth matter for democracy right now. When we collapse young people into a stereotype, we erase the resilience, urgency, and imagination they already bring to solving policy challenges at home and abroad.

Young people are not a fringe group in Canadian democracy. Nearly one in four Canadians is under the age of 35. Globally, there are 1.8 billion youth, the largest generation in history. Yet, despite our numbers, young people remain the least likely to be trusted with real decision-making authority.

In Canada's 2021 federal election, turnout was 46.7 per cent for ages 18–24, and 52.8 per cent for 25–34, compared to 74.9 per cent among those aged 65–74. That gap is often dismissed as apathy. But research shows young people engage deeply, often through grassroots organizing, mutual aid, and digital activism. When political systems invite youth in for optics rather than outcomes, it is no surprise that trust frays and participation lags.

We're entering a crucial window in this fall's session of Parliament. This is the moment when legislative agendas are set, and committee work is scoped. From housing affordability to artificial intelligence, decisions made this session will shape the conditions which young people inherit. That makes it more urgent than ever to move beyond symbolic gestures, and to ensure youth perspectives are embedded into policymaking, not just consulted at the margins.

At the Y20 in India, youth entrepreneurship wasn't a side conversation; it was central to the country's national strategy. In Tokyo, the Democracy Youth Forum—held in a country known for its civic traditions and intergenerational respect—broke ground as the first global youth democracy gathering hosted by Japan. In Montreal, One Young World showcased how diverse young leaders, from Nobel Prize winners to grassroots organizers, can share the same stage and push solutions forward.

The lesson across continents is clear: countries that trust their young people are finding new energy in their democracies. Those that reduce engagement to symbolic gestures are widening the gap between citizens and institutions. Canada must decide which path to take.

Young people move fluidly across scales: from local activism to global forums, from lived experience to systemic analysis. They carry not only formal credentials, but layered personal experiences—what I call the 4Ls:

- Lived experience (of illness, disability, or displacement)
- Loved experience (as caregivers to family or community)
- Laboured experience (as frontline workers or volunteers)
- Learned experience (through school, self-study, or mentorship)

These hyphenated identities are not liabilities—they are exactly what democracy needs to close blind spots, build trust, and design better systems.

Canada has an opportunity to lead by embedding youth partnership into the machinery of government itself. That means moving beyond photo-ops to structural commitments. Here are three steps that would make a meaningful difference:

1. **Create Youth Councils in every federal ministry.**

Standing councils—resourced, diverse, and representative—should advise ministers and deputy ministers. Just as gender-based analysis is now standard practice, youth perspectives should be built into policy design across portfolios. As part of the fall mandate letter refresh, each minister should be tasked with engaging their Youth Council at least once per quarter and reporting annually on insights and actions taken.

2. **Require youth impact assessments on new legislation.**

Alongside gender and equity analysis, departments should assess how proposals affect young people across the 4Ls—not just students, but workers, caregivers, and those with health or accessibility barriers.

3. **Build pipelines from global forums back into Parliament.**

When Canadians attend events like the Y20, the Democracy Youth Forum, or One Young World, they should submit formal report-backs to relevant committees and departments. This ensures global youth dialogue translates into domestic insight—and isn't lost in translation.

These aren't symbolic moves. They're trust infrastructure, mechanisms that ensure youth voices shape outcomes, not just invitations.

With Parliament back from summer break, Canadians have a chance to do more than listen. We can legislate with youth, design with youth, and rebuild trust with youth. If we embed youth as partners—ministry by ministry, bill by bill—Canada can become known not only as a convener of conversations, but as a country that empowers its youngest citizens to shape its biggest solutions.

That's not just an investment in youth. It's an investment in the future of democracy itself, here at home, and wherever Canada shows up in the world.

Linxi Mytkolli is the director of patient engagement at Diabetes Action Canada, and a global youth policy delegate with Young Diplomats of Canada.

The Hill Times

HEARD ON THE HILL

Continued from page 2

Senator Coyle, ministerial staffer Lee, Cool-Fergus among Clean50 Award winners

ISG Senator Mary Coyle, left, senior ministerial staffer Caroline Lee, centre, and environment advocate Alex Cool-Fergus are among the Clean50 award winners. *Photographs courtesy of X, LinkedIn, and submitted.*

Independent Senator **Mary Coyle**, senior ministerial staffer **Caroline Lee,** Climate Action Network's **Alex Cool-Fergus**, and four Industry Canada federal public servants are among the 2026 cohort of Canada's Clean50 Award recipients.

Delta Management Group and the Clean50 organization's annual awards "recognize those 50 individuals or small teams ... who have done the most to contribute to the clean economy in Canada over the past two years," said Delta Management Group's CEO **Gavin Pitchford** in an Oct. 15 press release.

Coyle received a Lifetime Achievement Award for founding and leading the non-partisan network Senators for Climate Solutions, supporting debate on the Canadian Net Zero Emissions Accountability Act, and her involvement with the 2025 Canadian Youth Climate Assembly.

Currently chief of staff to Environment and Climate Change Minister **Julie Dabrusin**, Lee's "work blends rigorous policy expertise with strategic leadership that shapes Canada's path to net zero," according to the awards website.

Cool-Fergus—daughter of Liberal MP **Greg Fergus**—is the Climate Action Network's national policy manager, and "has spent 15 years weaving together municipal insight, federal policy, and movement advocacy into climate action."

Finally, "Canada's cleantech industry finally got its first national map thanks to this team," the awards website said for Natural Resources Canada's **Victoria Orsborne**, **Torben Jensen, Sebastien Malherbe,** and **Morgan Wong**. "Led by Vicki, the four transformed Canada's cleantech intelligence landscape, creating the first-ever national database and taxonomy of cleantech firms."

Coyle met with other Clean50 Honourees on Oct. 15 at the Clean50 Summit 15.0 in Toronto.

Madan earns more than Kinew: CBC News

Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew, left, earns $195,936, while Richard Madan, right, Manitoba's senior representative in the U.S., earns $387,000 a year, CBC News reported on Oct. 16. *The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade and Jake Wright*

Manitoba's new senior representative in the United States **Richard Madan**, who became a father for the first time last week, is reportedly earning more than Manitoba Premier **Wab Kinew**, CBC News reported on Oct. 16.

Madan, who has been based in Washington, D.C., for many years now, first as a White House correspondent for CTV and then CBC, left that role this past June, weeks before taking on his current job for the Manitoba government. CBC News reported that Madan is earning $387,000 a year as Manitoba's trade representative in Washington, D.C., while Kinew earns $195,936, and Prime Minister **Mark Carney** earns $406,000 annually.

Kinew defended the salary in the Manitoba Legislature last week: "Richard Madan's a great guy. He's got the smarts. He's got the looks. He's got the connections to make the case for Manitoba in Washington, D.C."

Meanwhile, Madan posted on social media last week that he and his partner **Amanda** are the proud parents of a baby girl, **Annabelle**, born on Oct. 10, with a photo of the baby wearing onesie that said, "Made in America with Canadian parts."

Twin Otter looks to impress Ottawa from above

On Oct. 9, this *Hill Times* reporter took a ride on a 19-seat De Havilland DHC-6 Twin Otter over the city. Its pilots showed off a tight 360-degree turn over the Ottawa River before cruising over Parliament Hill, flying past the very decision-makers this Canadian plane's manufacturer is trying to impress.

Members of the media and public were recently treated to an air tour over the Ottawa River and through the Gatineau Hills, enjoying the stunning foliage and a smooth ride on a perfectly clear fall day.

Typically used in the Arctic and other remote areas, the dual-engine DHC-6 Twin Otter needs only a few hundred metres for takeoff and landing, and can do so on water, land, or a patch of ice. All things considered, this sortie was a quiet day at the office for the Twin Otter.

De Havilland isn't currently pursuing government procurement bids, but rather re-introducing the firm in consideration for future opportunities, as Prime Minister **Mark Carney** pushes a massive boost in defence spending, and a broader government-wide procurement initiative to "Buy Canadian."

—Marlo Glass

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The Hill Times

This 19-seat De Havilland DHC-6 Twin Otter took members of the media and the public on an aerial tour over the Ottawa River on Oct. 9. *The Hill Times photograph by Marlo Glass*

NEWS

Feds' new industrial strategy falls short on ambition, needs clearer objectives for defence procurement, say experts

Industry Minister Mélanie Joly unveiled a new three-pillar industrial strategy on Oct. 9 aimed at protecting Canadian industries, creating jobs, and attracting global investment. 'I don't think there's anything new here,' says former DND ADM Alan Williams.

Industry Minister Mélanie Joly says the government will use the 'power of procurement' to create jobs in the face of the trade war with the U.S. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

BY IREM KOCA

The government's new industrial strategy aiming to use defence procurement and the "Buy Canadian" policy to create jobs and attract investment is "predictable" and "bland," says one expert, arguing Canada needs an ambitious, clearly defined defence industrial plan.

Industry Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic–Cartierville, Que.) unveiled a new three-pillar industrial strategy on last week aimed at protecting Canadian industries, creating jobs, and attracting global investment to protect Canada from the impacts of the United States President Donald Trump's punishing tariffs.

Speaking at the Canadian Club of Toronto on Oct. 9, the minister said the government will "use the power of procurement," and leverage the "Buy Canadian" directive to source materials such as lumber and steel for major housing and defence projects.

"We will use the power of procurement to create jobs because, ultimately, what I've learned is companies would rather have contracts than subsidies from the government," Joly said.

"We'll invest in defence like never before: land, sea, air, cyber, health, and climate threats. We'll build a defence industrial strategy: buy, build, and partner."

Joly pointed to major defence acquisitions such as the planned submarine procurement, saying the government will ensure these contracts have Canadian content and intellectual property control, and will generate jobs. She also said the government will help domestic companies—such as Irving, Seaspan, and Davie—to not only build for the Canadian military, but also to export globally.

While he described defence procurement as "a wonderful lever" to strengthen domestic industries, Alan Williams, a former assistant deputy minister of materiel at the Department of National Defence (DND), argued that the government's approach lacks ambition.

"When I hear the statements at that level, I sort of roll my eyes. I mean, aren't those statements quite predictable, expected?" Williams said. "I don't think there's anything new here. Any industrial strategy wants to attract jobs."

Joly's office did not respond to *The Hill Times'* questions about the new strategy, and how these pillars would inform the highly anticipated defence industrial strategy. Joly had said back in August that the new defence industrial policy should be finalized in the coming months.

In an Oct. 14 interview with Radio-Canada, Joly said the government is pressing to get more economic benefits out of the planned purchase of 88 F-35 fighter jets from Lockheed Martin. This procurement has been under review since March, but Canada has committed to buying 16 jets from an American supplier. Joly also said the government could instead go for a smaller fleet of F-35s, and acquire a second fleet of Gripen E-series fighter jets from Swedish defence manufacturer Saab.

Williams said Canada needs a defence industrial strategy with clear goals, and a more targeted approach to deliver value. The government needs to look at how its allies structure their defence industries, and determine where it has the resources and expertise to strengthen a capability and where they already excel. And once those objectives are clearly identified the government should act on it, he said.

"Procurement has always been a vehicle used to create jobs in Canada," said Philippe Lagassé, an associate professor at Carleton University, pointing at the National Shipbuilding Strategy as an example. "It's just a question of whether or not we want to do it at a higher intensity."

What has changed, he argued, is the tone of the government tying this to the "Buy Canadian" policy for steel, aluminum, and other critical materials.

Lagassé said there's a lot of uncertainty about where Canada is going to invest, which might become more clear once a national security strategy—potentially followed by an updated defence policy—gives a better indication of where federal money will be spent or what capabilities the government will acquire.

This past June, Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) said an additional $9.3-billion would be spent on defence this fiscal year, with $2-billion aimed at reducing Canada's reliance on the U.S. The new funding would bring Canada to NATO's two-per-cent of GDP defence-spending benchmark. Carney also pledged to increase spending to five per cent of GDP by 2035, which he said would cost the government $150-billion per year.

One area that needs attention is defining who is accountable within the government, according to Lagassé.

"The industry minister seems to be speaking about defence procurement more than the defence minister, which is interesting. It's just notable that the face of defence procurement in government right now is everybody except the defence minister," he said, adding that responsibilities may be more clearly defined once the Defence Investment Agency under Secretary of State for Defence Procurement Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna, B.C.) is fully established.

David Perry, defence procurement expert and president of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, echoed that the government's pitch to use procurement to maximize industrial and economic benefits is nothing new.

What does ring new, according to Perry, is the emphasis on contracts over subsidies, which reflects a pattern where the government offers Canadian industry support but rarely follows through with purchasing commitments.

"One thing that's been consistently observed is that the government doesn't actually make commitments to purchase things from them," Perry said.

"You can only get so far with incentive programs and subsidies, particularly in the defence space," Perry said. He added that in some cases where the government isn't willing to make purchases and/or support companies' exports around the world, those firms have a difficult time especially if they did not get their first sale in their home market.

According to Perry, the bigger question is what the government will commit to buying from its domestic market.

"I would hope the defence industrial strategy identifies some specific capabilities from which the government wants to see purchases made domestically, both drawing on existing sources of supply, and identifying new areas where it actually wants to put in place incentives to have the Canadian market produce things the government needs," Perry said.

Perry also noted that it is easier said than done to push the "Buy Canadian" directive down the supply chains given how globally integrated they are, and that Canada's market size is too small to reshape it.

Williams pointed to the government's Industrial and Technological Benefits (ITB) Policy arguing it gives too much weight to industrial offsets, allowing companies to win contracts on promises of economic benefits rather than technical qualifications or cost. He argued the policy needs to be reformed to use a "pass/fail" model where policy goals would determine industrial benefits but it won't determine who wins a contract.

The government's ITB policy is administered by Innovation, Science, and Economic Development (ISED) Canada. It aims to leverage defence and Canadian Coast Guard procurements to strengthen the economy through investments that are meant to help increase exports, support innovation in research and development, and create jobs.

Under the policy, contractors bidding on major defence procurements have to submit an economic proposal, which becomes a part of the bid evaluation process.

While technical requirements are assessed by DND and the costs are overseen by Public Services and Procurement Canada, it's ISED that determines the economic benefit requirements on each procurement. The combination of all three components—technical requirements, costs, and economic-benefit requirements—make up the overall contracting criteria that determines which firm gets awarded multimillion-dollar contracts.

Defence procurement experts have previously said that a more strategic use of the ITB policy could help Canada source strategic goods such as steel and aluminum domestically while in the midst of a trade war with the U.S.

According to ISED's 2024 annual report, the ITB policy is estimated to contribute nearly $4.7-billion to Canada's GDP, and close to 40,200 jobs annually.

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NEWS

‘Not-an-option’ changes to freelance contracts may worsen shortage of Hill interpreters, says association

Changes to contract rules for freelance interpreters may lead to their mass exodus from the Hill, and a troubling decline in quality, according to a group representing these workers.

A recent poll of 90 freelance interpreters found that 50 per cent were unlikely to bid on contracts if the ‘lowest price’ requirement goes into effect, while 79 per cent were unlikely to bid on contracts paid at an hourly rate as opposed to daily. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

BY MARLO GLASS

Changes to contract rules for freelance interpreters may lead to their mass exodus from Parliament Hill, and a troubling decline in translation quality, according to a group representing these workers.

Alionka Skup, president of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) Canada, said if proposed procurement rules for interpreters go into effect, “a majority of freelance accredited interpreters in Canada will simply choose not to bid and not work for the government.”

Public Services and Procurement Canada’s (PSPC) proposed changes to awarding contracts to interpreters include awarding work based on “lowest bid” rather than “best fit,” as well as paying freelance interpreters by the hour instead of daily.

“Under these conditions, it’s just not an option,” Skup told *The Hill Times*.

A recent poll of 90 freelance interpreters found that 50 per cent of respondents were “unlikely” to bid on contracts if the “lowest price” requirement goes into effect, while 79 per cent were “unlikely” to bid on contracts paid at an hourly rate as opposed to daily.

“Many interpreters have been sidelined by injury and suffer from the cumulative effects of sub-standard sound in hybrid events,” the survey reads, with 66 per cent of respondents saying they’re unlikely to bid on Hill work due to a lack of safety measures.

AIIC represents most accredited official language interpreters in Canada, including many who work on a freelance basis on Parliament Hill, providing interpretation and translation services in the House, committee meetings, and more. As of this past March, the Translation Bureau had 61 staff interpreters and 84 freelancers on the roster for Hill events.

Skup said the poll was not meant to be a pressure tactic, but rather to take the temperature of what freelance interpreters think of the proposed changes. She said the most qualified, experienced, and tenured freelance interpreters will likely be the first to leave because they won’t want to work in a system that awards assignments to the lowest bidder.

“That will have an impact on the quality,” she said, noting there’s already a need for interpreters, and that freelancers do more than 50 per cent of translation work on Parliament Hill.

“There’s already a shortage,” she said. “So if the shortage is even worse, the quality is affected automatically. It’s just a fact.”

Freelance interpreters’ current contracts had been set to expire on June 30, but were given a six-month extension through to the end of December.

Previously, contracts were given to freelance interpreters based on their availability, followed by an individual’s language profile, security clearance, location, and finally an individual’s “Quality Index” rating. The proposed change means offers would instead “be ranked in descending order of lowest evaluated price, according to the request for information (RFI) posted by PSPC this summer.

Translation Bureau CEO Jean-François Lymburner recently told the House Committee on Official Languages that the pending procurement changes are a matter of financial accountability. *Screenshot courtesy of ParlVu*

Currently, interpreters are paid daily rates based on the length of their assignment, with some variation depending on whether interpreters are working in-person, in hybrid format, or at a distance. The RFI said a shift to hourly rates will “ensure the best value for Canada” and “are the best means of paying interpretation contractors for the actual effort that was made while reducing administrative burdens for all parties.”

Last year, dozens of freelance interpreters filed complaints against PSPC over what they described as “egregious” changes to their existing contracts. Procurement Ombud Alexander Jeglic found that the proposed amendments to interpreters’ contracts would substantively change its initial terms, and would reduce the hours interpreters could bill the government, reducing the amount of money they would be paid for the same amount of work.

Skup said the work interpreters do on Parliament Hill is “very demanding, very high stress,” and under very specific conditions.

“As professional conference interpreters, we need to have the working conditions, the framework that allows us to do this work well and also to protect our health and safety.”

Speaking recently before the House Official Languages Committee, Translation Bureau CEO Jean-François Lymburner said the pending procurement changes are a matter of “financial accountability,” as the cost of freelance interpreters has increased. The changes to the contract are in line with industry standards and best practices, he said in French at the Oct. 7 meeting, and the Translation Bureau had “consulted” industry partners on the pending changes.

Conservative MP Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, Que.), the committee’s vice-chair, grilled Lymburner on the terms of the contract renewal, asking what the Translation Bureau’s “mandate” was, if the contract changes were standard, and if AIIC had been consulted.

“No more than any others,” Lymburner responded in French, explaining that there was an “industry day” where professionals could submit questions to the department.

Skup, though, said she was “surprised” to hear Lymburner say AIIC had been consulted on the changes. The organization did participate in the “industry day,” but no questions were posed to the AIIC, she said.

Lymburner pushed back on criticism of the “lowest bidder” requirement for contracts, saying other factors would also be taken into account.

“We know our people. We know our resources, and we assign people to assignments,” he said in French. “It’s not fair to say that it’s only the lowest bidder. It’s a small group. These people could be assigned to some committees, not others, and some will be starting in a new committee. But that’s not the only factor we consider when we call upon the services of a freelancer.”

Committee members raised concerns that translation quality would suffer, but Lymberner said the lowest bidder doesn’t necessarily mean lowest quality.

“We were talking about quality assurance. You’re part of it,” he told MPs in French. “If you have complaints about interpreters, we take these complaints seriously. We engage in improvement exercises, and our team as a whole, looks at the work that we do, and this is how we can assure quality. There haven’t been many complaints.”

He said interpreters facilitated an “excellent” G7 meeting in Kananaskis, Alta., this summer, something that “is not easy to do” given the small pool of interpreters.

Lucie Levesque, the Translation Bureau’s vice-president of policy and corporate services, also said while the existing Quality Index might not be a criteria of the contract, it will still be taken into account, but “slightly differently.”

“All things considered, you look at the qualifications, security, and other factors, we will look to find the person who provides the best value,” she said in French.

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NEWS

Senate exempt from Carney's spending review, but opts to launch own program audit

'It seems there's a new government in place that wants to be fiscally more responsible,' says Conservative Senate Leader Leo Housakos, and the Red Chamber 'can help them achieve those goals.'

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN

ISG Senator Éric Forest, left, and Conservative Senator Claude Carignan, centre, are members of the subcommittee tasked with launching a program review after a motion from ISG Senator Lucie Moncion passed at a committee meeting with broad support. *The Hill Times photographs by Jake Wright, Andrew Meade*

Senators are planning to launch a program review to pick off "low-hanging" fruit and find efficiencies amid the Carney government's directive to make broad departmental spending cuts.

On Oct. 2, the Senate's Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration Committee's (CIBA) approved a motion tapping the Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets (SEBS) to launch the effort. The subcommittee has yet to meet on the topic and it was unclear when it would be expected to report back, though Senators suggested meeting this year's budget would be too tight a turnaround.

During the meeting, several pointed to the Liberal government's instructions that most departments find 15 per cent savings over the next three years. The House of Commons and Senate are exempt from that directive, but CIBA, which is responsible for the Senate's budget, received a letter from Senator Percy Downe (Charlottetown, P.E.I.) about the expenditure review. Downe, who is a member of the Canadian Senators Group (CSG), was not available for an interview.

The 2025-26 main estimates set out $139.2-million for the Upper Chamber, though the body typically doesn't spend all approved dollars. In 2023-24, for example, $134.9-million was approved, but about $118-million was spent.

Now, the six-member subcommittee is tasked with reviewing repetitive or unused costs to find efficiencies, with a plan to have interim reports in order to "bring changes quickly to the processes the Senate has in place," according to a breakdown of the approved motion by the office of CIBA chair Lucie Moncion (Ontario). The Independent Senator, the office said by email, would reserve comment until the subcommittee reports back but "is looking forward to receiving the fruit of SEBS' deliberations."

Senators on the 15-member CIBA expressed broad agreement that trying to find savings would be worthwhile even after hearing from staff that the Upper Chamber had already undergone a review in 2022 to cut costs down and implement a staffing cap.

Conservative Senate Leader Leo Housakos (Wellington, Que.) said there are "plenty" of "luxuries" Senators enjoy that could be worth reviewing.

"It seems there's a new government in place that wants to be fiscally more responsible. I think we can help them achieve those goals."

Senator Raymonde Saint-Germain (De la Vallière, Que.), the facilitator of the Independent Senators Group (ISG), said programs need to be reviewed one by one.

"We could identify a number of these areas where we can save money and I think it would be good for the taxpayer," she said, speaking in French.

Saint-Germain said there were several programs worth review, including the criteria to travel in business class. At that same meeting, Senators agreed to end a policy permitting spouses to expense language immersion training classes to the Upper Chamber.

"Efficiencies need to be found in all programs and I think that hasn't been done and I'm not blaming anyone," but she said it's now needed.

At the outset of the meeting, the committee's clerk Pascale Legault said the body previously launched "an efficiency review" at CIBA's behest in December 2022. From that review, the Senate launched "several initiatives to generate savings," and put a cap on administrative staff to 449 full-time equivalents, which she said remains in place today.

"Senators did not wait for direction from the central agencies to undertake a comprehensive review of its budget," Legault said.

She said the savings from that effort amounts to about $384,000 "returned to the Treasury Board" each year, and said as of March 31, the administration saved an additional $400,000 in "accommodation costs" in part due to smaller office footprints.

CSG Senator Jim Quinn (New Brunswick), CIBA's deputy chair, said it's important to take the time to "see what can be done" for the 2026-27 fiscal year, which is the deadline for departments to have their 10-per-cent savings plans in place.

"Budgets are being prepared now. In order to do a thorough job, I think we need to take our time," or they run the risk of their work being rushed and not thorough," he said.

"We also need to be careful as we do this work that we not lose sight that Senators are here to do their job," he said, noting some already feel they don't have the resources to do that work properly. Housakos also echoed that many feel office budgets are not large enough to allow Senators to do their work. As of 2024-25, Senators office budgets were $253,390, though Senators can also claim a number of other perks set out in the office management policy when it comes to travel, living, and hospitality expenses. Senate group budgets are also another line item.

Conservative Senator Leo Housakos said there are 'plenty' of 'luxuries' Senators enjoy that could be worth reviewing. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

ISG Senator Peter Boehm (Ontario) cautioned against an "across-the-board" approach to program cuts, saying the effort must be driven by setting out priorities, a prospect that is "difficult for any institution."

Boehm, a former longtime public servant, spoke of his experience watching past prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Stephen Harper embark on spending reviews and cost-saving measures. Both the leaders instituted multi-year efforts to wrangle spending through the 1994 "program review" and Harper's subsequent 2007 "strategic review" and 2012 Deficit Reduction Action Plan.

Both reviews "proved difficult" said Boehm, who was appointed to the Senate in 2018, noting to go with an "across-the-board" 10 per cent cut comes with the risk "you lose some of the programs that are very valuable."

Still, he said it's possible to "identify some very obvious low-hanging fruit that we can pick and process."

Senator Pierre Moreau (The Laurentides, Que.), the government's representative in the Senate, said he "wholeheartedly" agreed with a program review, but also cautioned against broad cuts just for the sake of it.

"Cuts across the board are never the right decisions," he said in French, given they often harm services intended for vulnerable groups, including Indigenous people. "Vulnerable people are our primary clients here in the Senate."

Speaking in French, he said there is an incentive to be "politically correct" and constantly support efforts to reduce budgets, but said Senators must have the means to do their work. He added they should not underestimate the efforts the Senate has already made in the last decade to control expenses.

Legault said the Senate "has been diligent in approving a reasonable budget" over the last decade, which she said has seen a 38 per cent spending growth by the body. But, accounting for inflation, she said that actually translates to a nine-per-cent growth over that period. She said Senate spending has increased at a slower rate when compared to the public service and other parliamentary institutions, and was due to deliberate choices made by Senators.

Those increases boil down to some key costs: caucus and group budgets, investment in IT infrastructure and systems including new public disclosure system, the reorganization of human resources and communications, broadcasting of ParlVu services, the new Senate of Canada Building in 2018, and the creation in 2020 of the Audit and Oversight Committee.

ISG Senator Éric Forest (Gulf, Que.) and Conservative Senator Claude Carignan (Mille Isles, Que.)—the SEBS chair and deputy chair, respectively—were unavailable for interviews. As of Oct. 8, they had yet to discuss the scope of the study, Forest's office said, with three other studies on the group's plate and no meetings scheduled during the break week as is typical.

Senators discussed whether to create a special working group for the effort, but ultimately decided SEBS was the right fit with the relevant expertise, though some pushed to have more Senators added for this specific study for a wider variety of perspectives.

Progressive Senator Kristopher Wells (Alberta) was among that number, and said it's important the work be done with an "equity lens."

"It's easy to say we should be cutting things from Senators' budgets when you are from Ontario and Quebec. It's very different when you're coming from other parts of Canada. Travel, accommodation, being away from family is a huge burden and consideration," said the 2024 appointee, noting some of the newer Senators have concerns about "certain policies and budgets that inhibit our role."

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NEWS

Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

New border bill cuts controversial measures, keeps powers to tighten immigration

The Liberals have split C-2 in two with the introduction of C-12, which grants the government significant new powers to crack down on asylum seekers and block or cancel applications for visas.

BY PETER MAZEREEUW

Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree's new border bill backtracks on some of the most controversial elements of his first stab at legislation in his new role, but C-12 still grants the government powers to crack down on asylum seekers and tighten Canada's immigration system.

Bill C-2, the Strong Borders Act, is the first substantive bill the government introduced into Parliament in June, but several of the omnibus bill's measures came under harsh criticism from legal experts and activists. None of the opposition parties have endorsed the bill, which means the government will have a tough time advancing it through the House.

Now Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Guildwood—Rouge Park, Ont.) is splitting that bill in two, and is turning his attention to Bill C-12, the Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act, which he introduced in the House of Commons on Oct. 8. The bill, which is at second reading in the House, is almost identical to Bill C-2, but with a few of the most controversial portions stripped away. Gone are part four, which proposed to give police and Canada Post the authority to open and search letter mail if certain legal thresholds are met; part 11, which would ban all cash transactions of $10,000 or more; and parts 14, 15, and 16, which collectively would make it easier for police and other authorities to gather electronic data and other private information to aid in their investigations.

Bill C-12 includes 11 parts taken from Bill C-2. It would give border services agents more power to search facilities storing goods destined for export. It would make it easier for the health minister to ban chemicals used to make synthetic drugs. It would authorize the Coast Guard to do security and intelligence work. It would include new money laundering penalties, and give authorities more power to collect and share information about sex offenders.

It would also give the government significant new powers to crack down on asylum seekers, and to block or cancel applications for visas. Those powers, proposed in C-2, also attracted plenty of criticism outside of Parliament, but have been included essentially unaltered in the new bill.

Among other things:

- It would allow the cabinet to throw out applications for visas, work permits, and certain other kinds of immigration documents received during a specified period of time if the cabinet deems it to be in the public interest to do so. These orders could be applied only to applications made by "certain foreign nationals," or specified classes of applications;
- It would make it easier for cabinet and for government officials to cancel visas or other immigration documents;
- It would prevent individuals who've been in the country for more than a year from making an asylum claim;
- It would make it easier for the responsible government minister to share data about people in the immigration system with government bodies, including in other countries;
- It would make it easier for the immigration minister and the Immigration and Refugee Board to declare that applications for protected status have been abandoned or withdrawn; and
- It would allow the immigration minister to specify what information and documents are required from applicants for refugee status.

The activist group Migrant Rights Network issued a press release on Oct. 9 calling on parliamentarians to reject Bill C-12. But that's not the last protest the Liberals will hear about this bill.

Anandasangaree confirmed during an appearance before the House Public Safety Committee on Oct. 9 that his government still intends to try to pass legal changes that would give police more powers to gather personal details from service providers in Canada, often referred to with the shorthand term "lawful access."

Some legal experts have criticized the government's repeated attempts over the past decade or more to give police broad lawful access powers.

"The sheer breadth of this proposed system was truly unprecedented and appeared entirely inconsistent with Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms," University of Ottawa law professor Michael Geist wrote in a recent blog post.

The lawful access provisions proposed in C-2 are "way more broadly applicable than they could ever possibly imagine that they could get away with," David Fraser, a lawyer with McInnes Cooper in Halifax, told *Politics This Morning* last month.

None of the three opposition parties was willing to support C-2. The government left the provisions on searching mail, large cash transactions, and lawful access out of Bill C-12 in order to get the other changes proposed in Bill C-2 passed into law, Anandasangaree told the committee on Oct. 9.

Bill C-12 "better represents a consensus within Parliament right now. The expectation [is] that we can move that along at a faster pace than C-2," he said.

However, the government isn't giving up on lawful access, he said. The minister promised to "work with law enforcement and all parties to ensure that a lawful access regime that is in line with Charter principles will be passed by this House" in the future.

A spokesperson for Anandasangaree confirmed that the government is, for now, planning to try to amend and pass C-2 at a later date, rather than introducing another new bill.

A version of this piece first appeared in Politics This Morning, your go-to source for insider news, analysis, and updates on where all the key political players are that day. Get more insider coverage directly to your inbox from The Hill Times' *executive editor Peter Mazereeuw and reporter Riddhi Kachhela in this subscriber-only daily newsletter.*

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NEWS

Conservative Party faces conflict-of-interest allegation over hiring of Alberta national councillor Feldbusch's husband as regional organizer

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, pictured recently. At the January 2026 biennial policy convention in Calgary, elected Conservative Party delegates will vote for national councillors, review Poilievre's leadership and vote on policy resolutions. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

The Conservative Party is a 'close-knit' group and it's not 'uncommon' for family members, including those of national councillors, to work for the party in different positions, says CPC's director of communications Sarah Fischer.

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Regional party organizers run the delegate selection meetings and act as the party's representatives in the field. They are responsible for implementing party policies, managing nominations, and conducting annual general and delegate selection meetings, among other functions.

Since the last federal election, the party has also been holding a series of annual general meetings across the country to elect riding executives in the newly formed electoral district associations that came into effect after last year's electoral boundary redistribution. In at least one case, allegations have surfaced publicly that a slate of 30 candidates was "unfairly" blocked by an Ontario regional organizer in the riding of Mississauga-Erin Mills, Ont.

Meanwhile, the party's deputy director of operations announced the hiring of Mark Feldbusch as an Alberta regional organizer in an email to that province's EDA presidents. Mark Feldbusch is responsible for all northern Alberta-area ridings while the party has a second regional organizer responsible for the southern-area ridings. He is succeeding outgoing regional organizer Lianne Bell who has taken up the position of director of American relations with the Government of Alberta.

"I'm happy to bring you news that joining the political operations team for Northern Alberta is Mark Feldbusch," wrote Jeremy Hollingsworth, the Conservative Party's deputy director of political operations, in an email to electoral district association presidents last month.

"Many of you likely know Mark from his long-time involvement in Conservative Party EDAs and campaigns. He's a great addition to the team and we're happy he'll be joining us as of today."

In interviews with *The Hill Times*, several senior Conservatives raised the concern that Mark Feldbusch's new position, while his wife is seeking re-election as a national councillor, creates a perception of possible bias and a potential conflict of interest. They contend that he could—whether knowingly or not—influence the process to benefit his wife. They also raised broader concerns about the current national council, describing it as the most "obedient" in recent memory—one that approved almost all party-headquarters decisions on nominations even when internal rules were not followed. They said the latest appointment reinforces the perception that the party is rewarding its loyal insiders.

According to his LinkedIn profile, Mark Feldbusch holds a diploma in electrical technology from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, and operates his own business. From 2022 to 2023, he served as a communications and policy adviser to Alberta's then-health minister. Prior to that, Mark worked as a communications assistant in the premier's office for a year. Between 2020 and 2021, he served as the legislative affairs coordinator for the United Conservative caucus.

"You can't run for national council if your husband is organizing the [DSM] meetings," said one senior Conservative in an interview with *The Hill Times*, who did not want to be identified.

"There's a clear conflict of interest of her husband being newly appointed regional organizer in Alberta. He can't perform the functions of the regional organizer in organizing AGMs [annual general meetings] and DSMs [delegate selection meetings] because he has a conflict of interest," a second Conservative source said.

Sarah Fischer, the Conservative Party's director of communications, said the party has implemented measures to ensure that Mark Feldbusch has no involvement in delegate elections in ridings where his wife is a candidate. Fischer did not specify what those measures are, when they were introduced, or how many delegate selection meetings Mark Feldbusch had overseen before they took effect.

Fischer said that the Conservative Party is a "close-knit" group and it's "not uncommon" for family members of party officials, including national councillors, to work for the party in different capacities as employees or vendors. She also said that the national council was briefed at its quarterly meeting in early October about Mr. Feldbusch's hiring, and that steps have been taken to avoid any conflict-of-interest situation.

"In making hiring decisions, the Conservative Party takes necessary steps to ensure there are no conflicts, or that any possible conflicts are properly managed. We are a close-knit group, and it is not uncommon for spouses, including spouses of national council members, to serve the party as a contractor, as a staff member, or in some other role. In the case of Mark Feldbusch, his engagement as regional organizer was disclosed to national council," wrote Fischer in her email to *The Hill Times* last week.

"Steps have been taken to ensure that Mr. Feldbusch has no involvement in connection with the election of national councillors to represent Alberta. It is unfortunate that anyone would suggest there is anything improper in the party engaging the spouse of a national council member."

According to Conservative sources, party president Stephen Barber mentioned Mark's hiring at the quarterly meeting, and also said that the new regional organizer would have no role in the delegate election process because it could be seen as a conflict of interest.

Al Siebring, riding association president for the riding of Ponoka-Didsbury, Alta., said that he does not see anything inappropriate about Mark Feldbusch's appointment, adding that while officiating delegate selection meetings, the regional organizer would have no way of knowing how riding members intend to vote. Siebring added that he is not aware of any measures put in place by the party to limit Mark Feldbusch's involvement in delegate selections, and confirmed that the regional organizer was scheduled to oversee a delegate selection meeting in his riding on Oct. 17.

"Why is that a problem? He's the returning officer for ours [DSM meetings], as well. That's part of the role, that's part of the job," said Siebring.

"We have to assume integrity, that's always the position I've taken in respect to issues like this. If, at the end of the day, there's proven to be a problem, then we have a problem, but we don't have a problem until we have a problem, and I don't see a problem," said Siebring.

But Siebring later called back to say that following his interview with *The Hill Times*, he received a text message from Mark stating that he had decided not to oversee the delegate selection meeting in Ponoka-Didsbury due to conflict-of-interest concerns.

Another source told *The Hill Times* that Mark Feldbusch was scheduled to oversee the delegate selection meeting in Parkland, Alta., on Oct. 18. This story was filed for print before that date, and it's unclear whether or not the regional councillor served as the returning officer for that meeting.

A fourth Conservative source, who in the past served as a regional organizer in a different province, said that they don't see a conflict of interest if Mark Feldbusch oversees delegate selection meetings. They argued that, based on past experience, most ridings have uncontested delegate selection meetings, with fewer than 10 members typically putting their names forward—all of whom are then confirmed as delegates. The source added that, in most cases, delegates tend to follow the guidance of the incumbent MP when deciding who to support in national council elections.

Meanwhile, in the 21-member national council, Ontario has four seats, Quebec three, British Columbia and Alberta two seats each, and Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, the three Atlantic provinces, and the three territories have one seat each.

The party leader is also considered as an automatic member of the national council, but does not regularly attend the council meetings. Each province's representation in the council is based on the proportion of seats it has in the House of Commons. The national council is responsible for overseeing the management of all party affairs except for the raising and spending of party funds, which is overseen by the Conservative Fund.

A national councillor can serve a maximum of three consecutive terms. However, after sitting out a term, they can run again. National council elections take place at each party convention. Elected delegates from each province vote to elect their respective province's national councillors.

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NEWS

Most ministers still trying to navigate how to ‘keep their jobs’ in Carney’s cabinet

Ottawa lobbyists say ministerial staffers aren’t returning their calls, but Liberal sources say it’s because ministers and their political aides are still trying to find their footing and determine how to survive in the new prime minister’s cabinet. But the sources say if lobbyists want meetings right now, they should be focused on the economy and the Canada-U.S. trade war.

Prime Minister Mark Carney came to partisan politics ‘very, very late,’ and is ‘a product of a rational world of machinery of government,’ says Prof. Donald Savoie. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne’s Nov. 4 budget will make clear what the government’s key priorities are. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Continued from page 1

minister—and until they do, both they and their staffers are playing it safe.

In interviews with *The Hill Times*, Liberal sources pointed out that almost two-thirds of the Carney (Nepean, Ont.) cabinet—including secretaries of state—are new, and even those who previously served in former prime minister Justin Trudeau’s administration see the current prime minister as a new kind of leader with a different style: a no-nonsense figure who expects his ministers to deliver results. If they don’t, they risk being shuffled out. This is unlike the previous Liberal government where Trudeau “let a lot of stuff go.” Sources said this is unlikely to happen under Carney.

They said the prime minister owes his rise to only a handful of people—certainly not the kind of extensive networks that backed previous leaders. To explain their point, they said that when Trudeau, Paul Martin, and Jean Chrétien each became prime minister, they did so with wide national support and the backing of caucus members and cabinet allies to whom they owed political obligations. These supporters and allies invested years of their own lives towards the personal success of their respective leaders.

That’s not the case with Carney’s success.

“[As an example,] you have David [Herle] and Scott [Reid and others, where] Martin was everything. He wasn’t just a person, it was an organization, [the Board] that Paul Martin … was a member of, and they ran an organization to make him prime minister, and their loyalty was only to Paul,” said a former senior Liberal.

At the age of 60, Carney stands out as an atypical prime minister, having ventured into elected politics later in life. His background is rooted in the federal bureaucracy, central banking, and the top echelons of the corporate sector. MPs, cabinet ministers, and political aides describe him as a no-nonsense leader who demands results, and who holds his ministers to high standards. He expects punctuality, professionalism, and preparation for meetings from both his staff and cabinet members. This includes arriving on time, dressing appropriately, and being fully briefed for meetings.

“It’s easy to appreciate why Carney is a product of the machinery of government, he’s not a product of partisan politics,” said Prof. Donald Savoie, Canada Research Chair in Public Administration and Governance at the University of Moncton, and who has authored and edited more than 28 books. “Carney came to partisan politics very, very late. He’s a product of a rational world of machinery of government. And so he’s much more comfortable with the rational world of machinery of government than he would be with partisan politics.”

According to Liberal sources, some current cabinet ministers are still trying to understand the direction coming from “The Centre”—specifically, Carney’s preferences and those of his close aides in the Prime Minister’s Office, and Privy Council Clerk Michael Sabia, whom Carney brought back to government from the private sector. Until they gain a clearer sense of how to navigate Carney’s leadership, ministers and their exempt staffers are expected to remain cautious in how they engage with stakeholders.

“These ministers haven’t really figured out—some of them have, some of them haven’t—how do you keep your job in a Carney cabinet. And one of the first things they [ministers in this situation] will do, if they’re unsure, is the same thing, which is nothing. Ministers are not going to launch individual initiatives independent of clear direction from the centre,” said one well-connected Liberal.

“There’s a lot of ministers that haven’t got a clue what to do next, and if they haven’t got a clue, I guarantee their staffers don’t have a clue. Will it work its way down? I believe it will. Will Carney have to shuffle his cabinet more regularly than previous prime ministers? Abso-fucking-lutely he will until he gets the team that he thinks he needs.”

The former senior Liberal agreed: “Cabinet is important and making important decisions, and ministers are expected to go to the table knowing their files and knowing the implications of what they’re trying to get through cabinet,” the source said.

“I’ve heard stories about ministers being told they didn’t come prepared to cabinet to answer the questions.”

To put his own stamp on the cabinet and to demonstrate a break with the Trudeau government, Carney appointed many ministers who had never served under his predecessor, while also promoting backbenchers and newly elected MPs. In doing so, he ruffled feathers among several cabinet hopefuls and experienced MPs who were passed over. Hill insiders are speculating that Carney will shuffle his cabinet around the new year, dropping under-performers and bringing in fresh talent. He is also expected to offer diplomatic appointments to some veteran MPs who in the past served as senior cabinet ministers in the Trudeau government. To succeed these outgoing MPs who hold safe Liberal seats, Carney is expected to recruit star candidates, which he was unable to do prior to the last election because of time constraints.

Meanwhile, in interviews with *The Hill Times*, one of the most common complaints from lobbyists is that, unlike the Trudeau government, the current exempt ministerial staffers no longer return their calls. Lobbyists who previously worked as senior staffers in past Liberal governments and have since moved into the lobbying sector said that during their time in government they made it a point to return calls within 24 hours—or have a junior staffer follow up to find out the reason for the call and offer assistance.

“It’s like pulling teeth,” said a lobbyist, who is a former senior ministerial staffer. “It’s important to return anybody’s call. It’s a matter of professional courtesy. Once your political career is over, how many people jump from being a political adviser [Liberal, Conservative or NDP] to the private sector in [lobbying] or a consulting firm? So, you know, they should treat us the way that they’d like to be treated.”

The source said their role is to serve as a bridge between the government and the private sector. At times, they explained, a company CEO may face an issue, but is unsure where to turn or whom to contact. Lobbying firms, they added, guide such clients on which officials to approach, and what documentation to prepare. Likewise, lobbyists often alert the government to emerging concerns within specific industries.

A second lobbyist echoed the same view: “They never answer their phone. So, you’re always leaving messages. We don’t know if they’re getting the message, so we’re calling all the time, leaving messages, and then I think that’s why, also, it’s taking so long for them to call back because no one actually answers the [office] phone,” said the source.

“We’re on the hunt for cellphones now because going through the office is horrible.”

Some other lobbyists said that the current government is very focused on the economy, and Canada-U.S. trade. They said the key to securing meetings with top staffers in the Prime Minister’s Office is to focus on the topics that interest them. If the discussion is about the economy, trade, or ways to generate more revenue, sources said, getting a meeting is rarely a problem. They added that in the federal budget on Nov. 4, Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint Maurice-Champlain, Que.) will make clear what the government’s key priorities are.

“What makes this government tick? What makes this government get off the couch?” the source said. “You’ve got to align your interests with the government’s. They’re the ones with their hands on the levers, right? But it’s not smoke and mirrors. It better be real.”

These lobbyists said that before going to meet with top staffers, their fellow public-affairs consultants should be well-prepared as they will get just one chance to make their case, and their proposals must be compelling and supported by solid data.

“This is not a PMO that is going to meet with somebody three or four times. If they meet with you, that’s your meeting,” the source said.

“They’re more accessible. They will engage in discussion, but as soon as the discussion is no longer worthwhile, it’s over. So if you reach out on issues that are important to them now, you will get their attention. When you get their intention, you better have a clear understanding of what drives this ship.”

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NEWS

AI study and Senate bills on alcohol warnings and sickle cell disease framework on Senate Social Affairs Committee's agenda

Policy priorities for some Senate committee members also include digital health technologies, the impacts of climate disasters, and medical assistance in dying.

Continued from page 1

and seven different types of cancers."

Those include breast, colorectal, liver, stomach and pancreatic cancers.

Brazeau said he began doing this research around 2018 or 2019 after he stopped drinking. In July 2022, he connected with University of Victoria academics who focused on alcohol policy. Those conversations contributed to the development later that year of a bill about including warning labels on alcoholic beverages. That bill died on the order paper once Parliament was prorogued in January 2025.

The Senator, who in 2018 told *The Hill Times* that he's "lucky to be alive" following his struggles with alcohol addiction and mental health, has made it a personal mission to inform Canadians about the harms of alcohol. He is also a well-known advocate of men's mental health. He received a Champion of Mental Health Award earlier this year from the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health for his efforts.

In addition to Bill S-202, Brazeau has re-introduced a bill that would eliminate the advertising of alcohol after his original proposal also died on the order paper earlier this year. The current bill, S-203, Alcoholic Beverage Promotion Prohibition Act, is being debated at second reading in the Senate.

Brazeau told *The Hill Times* in a phone interview on Oct. 15 that Bill S-202 in particular is not about telling people what to do, but about providing information that "they deserve and are entitled to, and they'll be able to make better decisions for themselves going forward."

Brazeau said his decision to focus Bill S-202 on alcohol's link to cancer, and not other physical or mental illnesses, is connected to the fact that Canadians are used to seeing similar warnings

CSG Senator Sharon Burey said one of her areas of focus is mental health. *Photograph courtesy of the Senate*

Bills of interest to PSG Senator Tracy Muggli include a Senate public bill that would result in the development of a sickle cell framework, and a private member's bill from the House of Commons calling for the creation of a strategy for flood and drought forecasting. *Photograph courtesy of the Senate*

on tobacco products. It is also a matter of his knowing what it takes to have bills move forward in Parliament.

"I've been in the Parliament of Canada long enough to know that when we introduce pieces of legislation that oftentimes they have to be clear, concise, short, and simple," said Brazeau, who has been a senator since 2009.

Connected to his determination to educate the public, Brazeau said his office is also looking into developing a public-awareness campaign. He said the campaign, which could include well-known individuals talking about the subject, would be designed to educate the public about the health impacts of alcohol, and not focus on building support for his bill.

"Right now, provincial governments aren't doing it, the federal government is not doing it, and the alcohol companies and lobby are doing absolutely nothing. And so it's time that we start focusing on the negative impacts of alcohol," Brazeau said about the campaign.

He called the initiative a "work in progress," and that his team is looking to see what it can do with its limited resources.

S-202 'may be the start of an important conversation': Osler

Senators Gigi Osler (Manitoba) and Sharon Burey (Ontario), both of the Canadian Senators Group (CSG); and Senator Tracy Muggli (Saskatchewan), of the Progressive Senate Group (PSG), all pointed to Brazeau's S-202 as a bill they will be paying particular attention to this fall.

The Social Affairs Committee, of which all four Senators are members, began studying Bill S-202 on Oct. 9.

The Hill Times reached out to multiple senators on this committee who have a background in health care delivery or health policy to understand their priorities this fall.

Osler, a surgeon and a former Canadian Medical Association president, told *The Hill Times* that she is looking forward to hearing different perspectives on S-202, adding, "It may be the start of an important conversation in this country."

Osler is also watching out for the possible re-introduction of a bill introduced by Justin Trudeau's Liberal government that died on the order paper when Parliament was prorogued last January. Bill C-72, Connected Care For Canadians Act, would have required the standardization of health-data technology so that data could be read and shared between different systems.

Current Health Minister Marjorie Michel (Papineau, Que.) told *iPolitics* this past summer that re-introducing Bill C-72 would be a priority.

Osler said she considers the bill to be an "important" one that the "federal government can use to better influence the co-ordination of health across the country."

Burey, a pediatrician, said in a statement to *The Hill Times* that her interest in Brazeau's Bill S-202 and Bill S-201, National Framework on Sickle Cell Disease Act, speak to her commitment to protecting the health and well-being of Canadians, especially children.

Burey said another priority is engaging with various communities on mental health initiatives, particularly as they relate to brain development; early and preventive interventions; and ways to foster collaboration amongst different stakeholders.

Muggli, a former hospital executive and bureaucrat in Saskatchewan's provincial health authority, pointed to her past professional experience to explain her interest in Bill S-202.

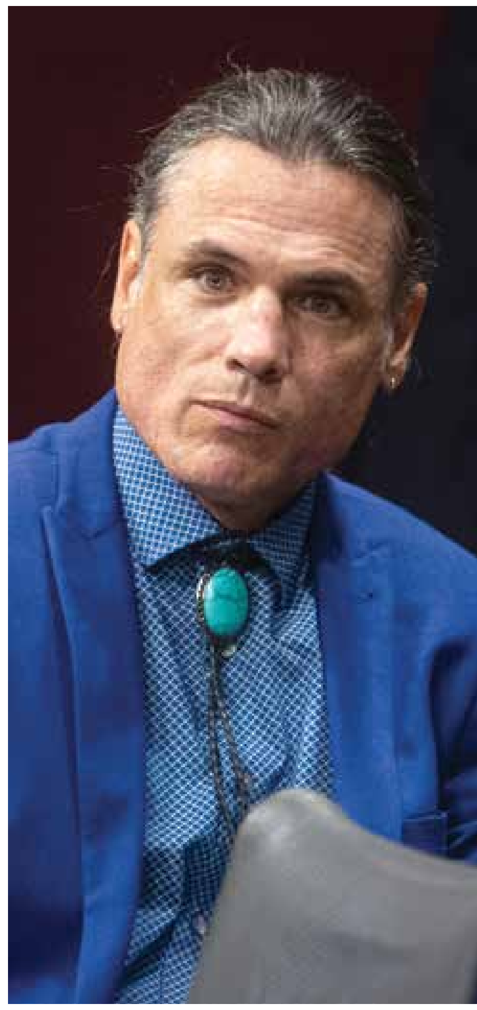
"I do know that when I was executive director of St. Paul's Hospital here in Saskatoon that the presentations of [alcohol] use to our emergency department [were] triple and quadruple the presentations for all other substances combined," said Muggli, who is also a social worker.

"So, I'm all in for looking for solutions, and maybe that's labeling," she added. "I know Senator Brazeau's bill is specific to cancer. … We could have 100 labels on alcohol with concerns about negative outcomes of its use. So, we need to work that through."

Brazeau said that many bills don't make it past second reading, and that he and his team consider it "kind of a big thing" for Bill S-202 to make it to the committee stage especially in light of his lack of affiliation with any formal Senate group. The bill received second reading on June 12. He attributed S-202's steady progression to his lived experience with alcoholism which "brings a rather serious level of credibility to the issue," and the fact that there are multiple Senators who are also doctors on the Social Affairs Committee and that they have their own concerns about the negative impacts of alcohol.

Sickle cell framework study on the go; child youth strategy bill, AI studies in the works

Like Burey, Muggli said she is paying particular attention to Bill S-201, which was introduced by now-retired senator Marie-Françoise Mégie. If passed, the bill would require the federal government to develop a framework to support those impacted by sickle cell disease. The framework would include the creation



of a dedicated national research network, and making the disease eligible for existing disability benefits.

Since Mégie's retirement from the Senate last month, CSG Senator Tony Ince (Nova Scotia) has taken over as the bill's sponsor. During a Social Affairs Committee meeting studying the bill on Oct. 1, Ince told his colleagues that the call for a framework was "deeply personal" to him as he has a close family member with the disease.

Sickle cell disease is an inherited disorder that results in deformed red blood cells, which block blood flow. This can lead to health complications, including anemia, stroke, and extreme and sudden pain.

Bill S-201 states that the disease is especially prevalent among people of African, Caribbean, Middle Eastern, and South American descent.

Muggli said she is also focused on the impacts of climate disasters. She is particularly interested in Bill C-241, National Strategy on Flood and Drought Forecasting Act, from Liberal MP Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Que.).

"I'm looking at supporting a bill once it comes our way on flood and drought forecasting … with a lens of what happens when we cannot provide appropriate warning or support to people who are impacted by floods and droughts," Muggli said.

"We have immense mental health challenges and issues in substance use and homelessness, etc."

She said she would be interested in sponsoring the bill—currently awaiting second reading in the House of Commons—if it makes its way to the Senate.

Waiting for a Social Affairs Committee study is Independent Senator Rosemary Moodie's Bill

NEWS

Non-Affiliated Senator Patrick Brazeau, left, CSG Senator Gigi Osler, and PSG Senator Katherine Hay all sit on the Senate Social Affairs Committee, which is currently studying Brazeau's bill to add warning labels to the packages of alcoholic beverages. *The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia*

S-212, National Strategy for Children and Youth Act. Moodie, an Ontario senator who is a pediatrician and neonatologist, is also the committee's chair.

Bill S-212 calls for a children and youth strategy that would work toward the "complete elimination of child poverty," and contribute to a "high and consistent standard of living" for children and youth in Canada.

The Hill Times requested an interview with Moodie, but the senator was unavailable prior to this article's deadline.

Outside of his own bills, Brazeau told *The Hill Times* that he is "looking forward to seeing what happens" with Bill S-234, National Framework on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Act, due to its connection to alcohol policy. The bill, which calls for the development of a framework, was introduced by ISG Senator Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia (Newfoundland and Labrador) and is being debated at second reading in the Senate.

Brazeau, a member of the Algonquin community of Kitigan Zibi, said he is also considering a motion or a bill that would call on the federal government to begin working with First Nations in Canada to eliminate the Indian Act.

Also on the docket for the Social Affairs Committee is a study on artificial intelligence, according to Osler, who is its deputy chair.

When the study will begin is not yet clear, with Osler noting that Liberal government bills will take precedence. Committee members are currently waiting for Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2025), to land in its chamber.

The government bill would undo a change implemented in 2009 that prevented Canadian citizens born outside of the country from passing citizenship status onto their child if that child was also born or adopted outside of Canada. The Ontario Superior Court of Justice declared in December 2023 that the first-generation limit was unconstitutional, and ordered the feds to fix the law. After receiving four extensions to pass new legislation, the federal government's next deadline is Nov. 20, 2025.

Bill C-3 has passed the committee stage in the House, and awaits third reading.

Osler told *The Hill Times* that the Social Affairs Committee's study on AI would consider issues of data governance, data sovereignty, ethics, privacy and safety, risks, benefits, and social impact.

Looking forward to that study is PSG Senator Katherine Hay (Ontario), who told *The Hill Times* that studying AI and its intersection with health will "100 per cent" be her priority. She said she is focusing on looking for "system solutions" to health care challenges, and that includes understanding how AI can help improve health care delivery.

"I will be focused on e-solutions, digital solutions, AI, and machine learning. I myself have used it in the work that I've done in the past in youth mental health, and so I will be looking at that," said Hay, who was CEO of Kids Help Phone before being appointed to the Senate this past March.

Referring to her time leading the youth mental health helpline, Hay said, "We brought in AI machine-learning technology on the virtual frontlines for youth mental health, which enabled us to scale and scale and scale to the tune of 250 per cent in five years time to support young people. So, I have seen the implementation side of AI."

That scaling up refers in part to how Kids Help Phone used AI and machine learning to train volunteer crisis responders (who were overseen by professional counsellors).

Other priorities for Hay is the need to ensure that made-in-Canada tools are being used to improve health care, and ensuring that system improvements are also felt in rural and remote communities.

Also providing his perspective to *The Hill Times* about health policy priorities was ISG Senator Victor Boudreau, who was a Liberal health minister in New Brunswick between 2014 and 2017, and a member of the province's legislative assembly between 2004 and 2018.

Boudreau said he is very interested in the social determinants of health, and issues that arise from those including mental health and affordability measures. He also closely follows developments related to the new Canada Disability Benefit, which began making payments to eligible individuals this past summer after related legislation passed in 2023.

"The Canada Disability Benefit fell well short of what stakeholders were hoping for, and there's still a lot of complexities even to apply for the benefit," Boudreau said.

He added that he believes that individuals who qualify for provincial disability benefits should "automatically get the federal benefit" due to the complexity of the application process.

Boudreau will be paying particular attention to any legislation or policy discussions surrounding medical assistance in dying (MAID). He noted there is a Senate public bill on the subject.

S-231, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), commenced second reading in the Senate on June 16, 2025. The bill, sponsored by CSG Senator Pamela Wallin (Saskatchewan), would allow for advance requests where individuals whose illnesses could cause them to lose capacity in the future can apply for and consent to MAID early.

MAID is currently an option for those with a grievous medical condition—excluding mental illness—for which there is no cure. A plan to extend eligibility to those with a mental illness has been deferred to March 17, 2027.

Boudreau said he supports MAID, and believes the system can "go further in terms of advanced directives."

Saying he doesn't want "MAID to become a crutch for a health care system that's not able to provide proper care or services to Canadians," Boudreau said he still thinks that "people deserve the right to die with dignity" and people with medical reasons should be able to choose MAID as an option.

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Former Liberal New Brunswick health minister Victor Boudreau joined the Senate in June 2024. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

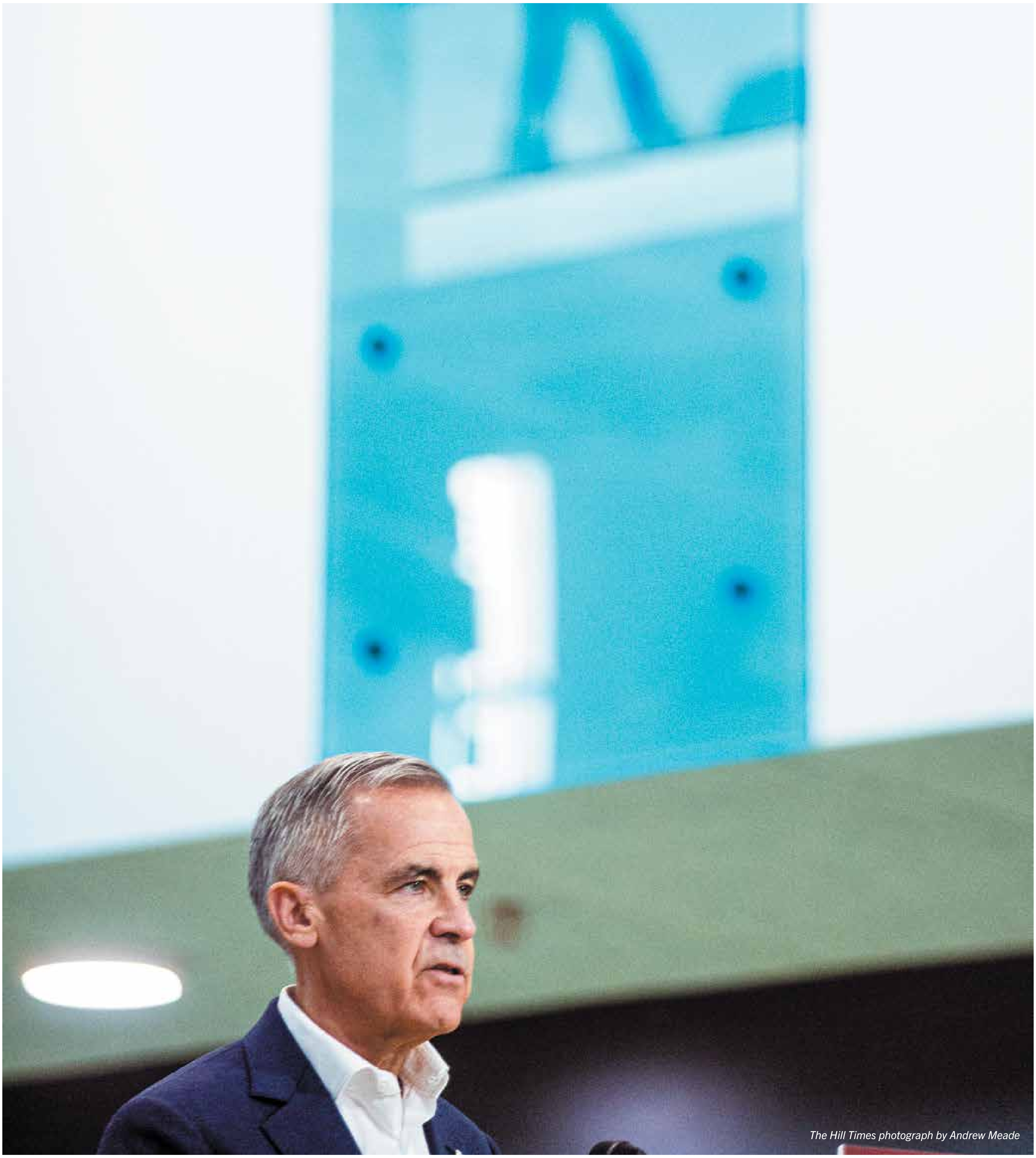
Health-related bills in the Senate

The following is a list of health-related bills introduced in the Senate during the current session, and their status as of Oct. 16, 2025

- S-201, National Framework on Sickle Cell Disease Act, initially introduced by then-ISG senator Marie-Françoise Mégie, is being studied by the Social Affairs Committee, and is now sponsored by CSG Senator Tony Ince.
- S-202, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning label on alcoholic beverages), sponsored by non-affiliated Senator Patrick Brazeau, is being studied by the Social Affairs Committee.
- S-203, Alcoholic Beverage Promotion Prohibition Act, sponsored by non-affiliated Senator Patrick Brazeau, is being debated at second reading in the Senate.
- S-204, National Framework on Heart Failure Act, sponsored by Conservative Senator Yonah Martin, was read for the first time in the Senate on May 28, 2025.
- S-212, National Strategy for Children and Youth Act, sponsored by ISG Senator Rosemary Moodie, passed second reading in the Senate on June 18, 2025. It is awaiting a study by the Social Affairs Committee.
- S-228, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sterilization procedures), sponsored by ISG Senator Yvonne Boyer, passed third reading in the Senate on Oct. 2, 2025. It's awaiting first reading in the House.
- S-231, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), sponsored by CSG Senator Pamela Wallin, is being debated at second reading in the Senate.
- S-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assault against persons who provide health services and first responders), sponsored by Conservative Senator Leo Housakos, was read for the first time in the Senate on Sept. 23, 2025.
- S-234, National Framework on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Act, sponsored by ISG Senator Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia, is being debated at second reading in the Senate.

THE BIG PHOTO

Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured at the Minto Recreation Complex Nepean, Ont., on Oct. 10, 2025, announcing the automatic filing of government benefits for the GST/HST credit, the Canada Child Benefit, the Canada Disability Benefit. He also announced the National School Food Program will be made permanent in schools across Canada, and he promised to renew the Canada Strong Pass for the holidays and for the summer of 2026. Said *HT* photographer Andrew Meade: 'I was trying to find interesting elements to incorporate into the picture and the blue panel on the upper wall of the gym caught my eye so I used it to try and make a frame that was different than the talking head at a podium picture.'



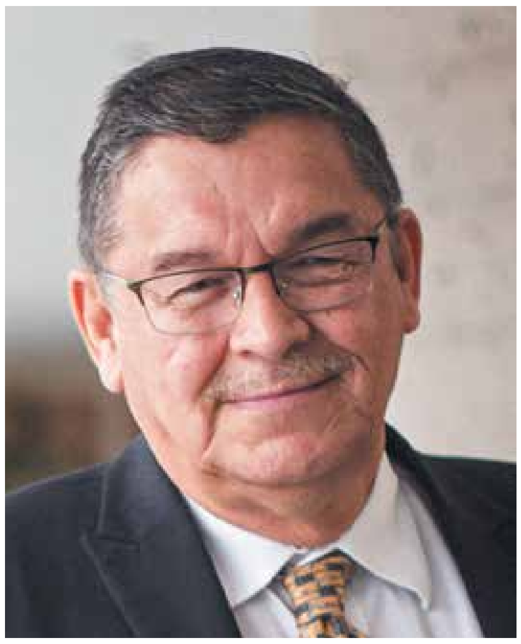
The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Hill Climbers

By Laura Ryckewaert

A look at the staff labouring in the offices of secretaries of state Zerucelli, Belanger

Both secretaries of state have six-member teams, which appears to be the average office size for Prime Minister Mark Carney's fleet of junior cabinet members.



Secretary of State for Labour John Zerucelli, left, and Secretary of State for Rural Development Buckley Belanger. *The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia and Andrew Meade*

Like most of their junior cabinet counterparts, Secretary of State for Labour **John Zerucelli** and Secretary of State for Rural Development **Buckley Belanger** have continued the trend of six-member offices.

Zerucelli's team is led, as previously reported, by chief of staff **Noémie Fiset-Tremblay**, a former deputy chief of staff and policy director to then-employment, workforce development, and labour minister **Steven MacKinnon**.

Adviser **Brett Szmul** is focused on policy in Zerucelli's office.

Brett Szmul is a policy adviser to Zerucelli. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Szmul's had an eventful year, having run as the Ontario Liberal candidate in Ottawa West–Nepean in the province's February election, and graduating from Carleton University with a master's degree in international affairs. For those curious, Szmul ended up placing third in the election, with incumbent NDP MPP **Chandra Pasma** ultimately holding the riding. Szmul's work history includes time spent as a high-speed rail analyst with Transport Canada, and as a compliance director with the G20 Research Group.

Sashalie Quiros is director of operations to Zerucelli. She's spent the last almost six years working for now-former Ontario Liberal MP **Francesco Sorbara**, who lost his seat in the April 28 federal election.

Liane Kotler is director of communications and issues manager to Zerucelli. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Liane Kotler fills the dual role of director of communications and issues manager. She, too, threw her name in the electoral ring this year, in her case going up against Conservative MP **Melissa Lantsman** as the federal Liberal candidate in Thornhill, Ont., this past spring. Kotler came second in the race, with 31.2 per cent support to Lantsman's 66.4 per cent.

Kotler is a former longtime producer with TVO in Toronto, where she worked from 1995 until the start of 2024, and more recently was a senior media adviser with StrategyCorp. She's also previously taught media studies at her *alma mater*, Queen's University.

Working closely with both Quiros and Kotler is senior operations and communications adviser **Keagan McNeil**.

Keagan McNeil is a senior operations and communications adviser to Zerucelli. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

McNeil most recently worked as a senior operations and Ontario regional affairs adviser to then-housing minister **Nathaniel Erskine-Smith**. A former assistant to then-Ontario Liberal MP **Vance Badawey**, McNeil served as Badawey's campaign manager during this year's election; ultimately, he lost the seat to now Conservative MP **Fred Davies** by a margin of just 3.9 percentage points. McNeil is also a former 2023 summer intern in then-Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario minister **Filomena Tassi**'s office. She graduated from Carleton University with a master's degree in political management this year.

Rounding out Zerucelli's team is **Jordan Andrade** as executive assistant to both Zerucelli and his chief of staff.

Jordan Andrade is executive assistant to Zerucelli and his chief of staff. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Andrade graduated from the University of New Brunswick with a bachelor of applied management degree in 2023, and has spent the past roughly two years working for RST Sunbury Transport in the province, most recently as a long-haul planner.

Looking to Belanger's rural development team, the rookie MP has pulled heavily from former rural economic development and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) minister **Gudie Hutchings'** old team.

Sean Cruz plays a pivotal role as both a regional and policy adviser to Belanger. Rather than a specific region, Cruz provides general regional advice to the secretary of state.

Sean Cruz is a regional and policy adviser to Belanger. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Cruz is a former aide to Hutchings as then-rural economic development and ACOA minister, and has twice interned on the Hill: first at the Senate over the summer of 2023, and then in Hutchings' office over the summer of 2024, after which he was hired on as a North regional adviser and communications assistant.

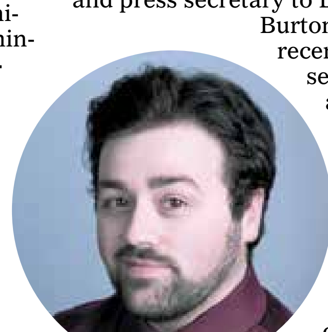
Hailing from the Rock—specifically, Happy Valley–Goose Bay, N.L.—Cruz helped run Liberal candidate, now-MP **Philip Earle**'s successful campaign to represent Labrador, N.L. in the House this past spring.

As previously reported, Belanger's team is led by chief of staff **Maria Morley**, who used to lead then-agriculture minister **Lawrence MacAulay**'s office.

Alexis Keizer is a parliamentary affairs and issues adviser to Belanger. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Alexis Keizer is a parliamentary affairs and issues adviser in the office. She, too, interned in Hutchings' rural economic development and ACOA office over the summer of 2024, and was subsequently hired—in her case, as an issues adviser and executive assistant to the chief of staff. Keizer graduated from Carleton earlier this year with a master's degree in law and legal studies.

Connor Burton is senior communications and issues adviser, and press secretary to Belanger.



Connor Burton is senior communications and issues adviser, and press secretary to Belanger. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Burton was most recently press secretary and communications adviser to Hutchings as rural economic development and ACOA minister. He spent this year's federal election working on Sydney–Glace Bay, N.S., Liberal MP **Mike Kelloway**'s successful re-election campaign, and is both a former intern with StrategyCorp and a former parliamentary research assistant to Nova Scotia Senator **Mary Coyle**, amongst other past experience. He, too, holds a master's degree in political management from Carleton University as part of the graduating class of 2023.

Suzanne O'Malley is senior adviser, executive assistant, and office manager to Belanger. O'Malley was previously executive assistant to Hutchings as minister, and is also a past aide to Ontario Liberal MP **Ryan Turnbull**.

Also on Belanger's roster is driver **Solomon Biniam**, who was previously driver to then-minister Hutchings.

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Party Central

By Stuart Benson

1

CPAC celebrates more than three decades of 'unconditional neutrality'

Canada's public affairs channel hosted a classy fall reception on Oct. 9 in the Sir John A Macdonald Building

The good folks over at CPAC capped off the first leg of the fall party season—before parliamentarians and politicos alike headed home last weekend for turkey and gravy—with their swanky annual reception in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building in celebration of over three decades documenting and reporting on the most exciting political drama in Canada with "unconditional neutrality."

Ahead of the Thanksgiving long weekend and the first constituency week of the fall session, it was over to SJAM to celebrate CPAC's 33rd year on the air—only counting post-rebrand—at their annual fall reception, which once again lived up to its high-class reputation.

While simply booking SJAM as a venue imbues a party with a decent baseline of class, the gold-chrome-plated booze-bar, fancy cheese and charcuterie spread, complete with ornamental pears, a fresh-shucked oyster station, plus an accompanying jazz duo singing lounge standards, definitely kicked up those vibes several notches.

Upon arrival, guests were also gifted complimentary CPAC-branded luggage tags, which would be handy for those politicos and politicians preparing to head home the next morning.

After building a generous plate of oysters alongside several other hungry journalists similarly seeking a free dinner, **Party Central** was able to get a hands-on look at some of the renovations currently underway at Centre Block, courtesy of the team at Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). Project Director **Ramez El Khanagry** even let this reporter get a feel for some of the fresh copper shingles that will replace the old roof. Additionally, if you happen to have any suggestions for a good way to recycle a whack-ton of old copper, PSPC is all ears.

Among the crowd, **Party Central** spotted plenty of the CPAC-pals, including its English and French flagship hosts, **Michael Serapio** and **Marc-André Cossette**; chief operating officer **Jeremy Clarke;** board chair **Pam Dinsmore** and the rest of its directors, including Cogeco's **Paul Beaudry,** Quebecor's **Jad Barsoum,** and Access Communications' **Carmela Haines,** Eastlink's **Marielle Wilson.**

Of course, CPAC's fearless leader, president and CEO **Christa Dickenson,** was also on hand to address attendees, thanking them for their support and reaffirming the broadcaster's commitment to "unconditional neutrality."

House Speaker **Francis Scarpaleggia** also spoke to the crowd and marvelled that there was ever a time without CPAC—launched in its present form in October 1992—and its unfaltering coverage of what he described as the best "reality television" you can find.

Fresh from the stage, there were also plenty of that drama's—or comedy's–stars, including Liberal MPs **Rob Oliphant**, **Ahmed Hussen**, and **Mona Fortier**; Conservative MPs **Frank Caputo**, **Scott Aitchison**, **Roman Baber**, and **Clifford Small**; script writers like **Sam Lilly**, the Opposition Leader's media relations manager; members of the paparazzo-press gallery, including *The National Post*'s **Chris Nardi;** *The Toronto Star's* **Raisa Patel** and **Mark Ramzy;** former CBCNN reporter **Julie Van Dusen**, *The Globe and Mail's* **Nojoud Al Mallees** and **Emily Haws**; *Le Journal de Québec's* **Guillaume St-Pierre**, *The National Observer's* **Matteo Cimellaro**, *Politico*'s **Mickey Djuric**, and The Canadian Press' **Kyle Duggan** and **Anja Karadeglija**; assorted politicos—**Party Central** couldn't think of a good pun—including Crestview Strategies' **Ashton Arsenault,** McMillan Vantage's **Richard Mahoney,** Rogers' Communications **Hardave Birk,** Pendulum Group's **Heather Bakken,** Compass Rose Group's **Samantha Thompson, Marci Surkes,** and **Jessica Eritou,** and Bluesky Strategy Group's **Geoff Turner;** and an appearance from Ottawa Mayor **Mark Sutcliffe.**

While the bar remained open until 8 p.m., as most of the above would have a reasonably light day the following morning, **Party Central** wasn't so lucky—due to the Thanksgiving Monday really throwing a wrench in the publishing schedule—and signed off for the night.

It's quiet on the Hill this week, but **Party Central** will be back for the Canadian Association of Broadcasters's event at the National Arts Centre on Oct. 21, and then on Oct. 22 with the Library and Archives' 2025 Canada Scholar Awards.

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CPAC President and CEO Christa Dickenson. *The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson*

House Speaker Francis Scrapaleggia. *The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson*

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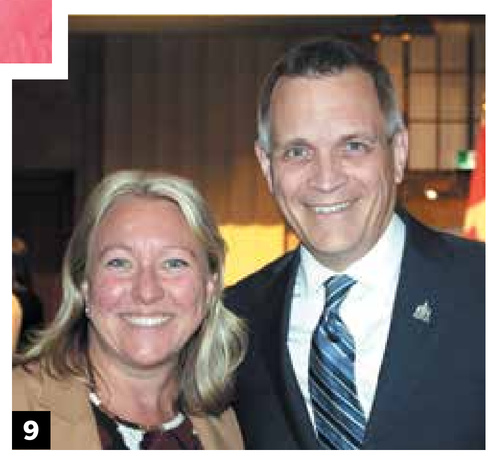


The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson

1. Olivia Cannings, left, CPAC's Michael Serapio, and Julie Van Dusen at CPAC's fall reception on Oct. 9 in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building. **2.** Ramez El Khanagry, project director for Public Services and Procurement Canada, left, and Gowling WLG's Jacques Shore pose with an old copper shingle removed from Centre Block roof during the ongoing renovations. **3.** Dickenson, left, and Scrapaleggia. **4.** Compass Rose Group's Samantha Thompson, left, Marci Surkes, and Jessica Eritou. **5.** Liberal MP Ahmed Hussen, left, and Senator Mohammad Al Zaibak try unsuccessfully to have a private conversation. **6.** *The Toronto Star*'s Mark Ramzy, left, Raisa Patel, and Politico's Mickey Djuric enjoy the free oysters to varying extremes. **7.** Pendulum Group's Heather Bakken, left, and CPAC's Jeremy Clark. **8.** Conservative strategist Cole Hogan, left, and the Bank of Canada's Isabel Jenish. **9.** Liberal MP Mona Fortier, left, and Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe.

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.

AG Hogan to release six audit reports on Tuesday, Oct. 21

Auditor General Karen Hogan will deliver six performance reports to the House on Tuesday, Oct. 21, at 10 a.m., and will hold a press conference in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building at 12:30 p.m. ET. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

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.

MONDAY, OCT. 20

Orientation for New MPs, Session Two—The Parliamentary Centre and Carleton University host the second session of an Orientation for New MPs. Speakers include Chief Justice Richard Wagner, Justice Mahmud Jamal, and senior representatives from the Bank of Canada. Followed by a Q & A and a tour of the Supreme Court. Spouses welcome. Breakfast refreshments served. Monday, Oct. 20, 8 a.m. at The Supreme Court of Canada, 301 Wellington St. Register: parlcent@parlcent.org.

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 Metropolitain Montreal. Monday, Oct. 20, at 11:30 a.m. ET at Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, 900 René-Lévesque Blvd. W., Montreal. Details: ccmm.ca.

Film: *Path to Total Victory*—The Conference of Defence Associations and Liberal MP Judy Sgro host the premiere screening of *Path to Total Victory*, retracing the steps of Canada's wartime heroes in commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands and Victory in Europe. Monday, Oct. 20, at 5 p.m. ET in Room 310, Wellington Building 197 Sparks St., Ottawa. RSVP marc129@rogers.com.

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.

Special Olympics Canada Hill Day—Special Olympics Canada will be on the Hill for meetings all day to raise awareness about supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. A friendly soccer match on Parliament Hill lawn will take place at 11:30 a.m., followed by a reception and bocce games at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier at 6 p.m. ET. Tuesday, Oct. 21, in Ottawa. Details: sbarker@specialolympics.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.

Green Building Day on the Hill—The Canada Green Building Council, along with Liberal MP Ryan Turnbull, Conservative MP Scott Aitchison, Bloc MP Gabriel Ste-Marie, and Senator Suze Youance host a parliamentary reception to celebrate the green building sector's contribution to Canada's low-carbon economy. Oct. 21 at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Delta Hotel Ottawa City Centre, 101 Lyon St. N., Ottawa. RSVP: jfagelson@cagbc.org.

Today's Famous 5 Ottawa Award—Famous 5 Ottawa will recognize five women who are blazing trails, challenging norms, and lifting others up in the Ottawa region. Tuesday, Oct. 21, at 5:30 p.m. ET in the Richcraft Atrium, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. 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.

'Reimagining Trade in the Federation' —The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts "Barriers and Bridges: Reimagining Trade in the Federation," a chance to reflect on the future of internal trade in Canada. Participants include former Quebec premier Philippe Couillard; professor Stéphane Paquin; and Maryse Picard, lawyer and former executive director of the Huron-Wendat Nation. Wednesday, Oct. 22, at 5 p.m. ET at the Morrin Centre, 44 Chaussée des Écossais, Quebec City. Details: irpp.org.

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@psychedlicscanada.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 instalment 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 Pvt., University of Ottawa. Contact: clnd@pugwashgroup.ca.

Ex-CBC Reporter Brian Stewart to Discuss New Book—Former CBC foreign 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 online and in person at Arcadian Court, 401 Bay St., Simpson Tower, 8th floor, Toronto. 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-lautrecolline.ca.

TUESDAY, OCT. 28

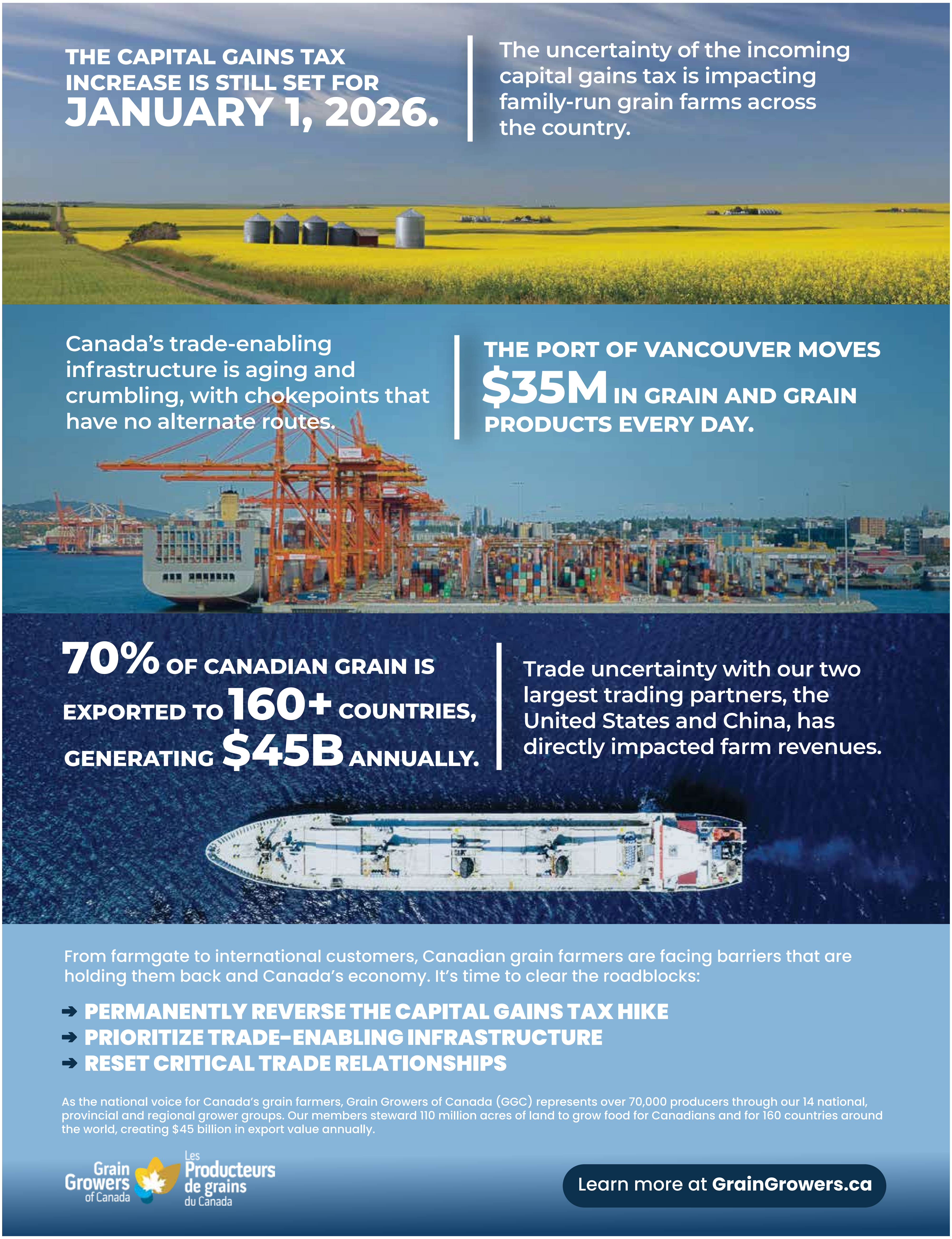
Conference: 'Canada's Next Chapter in the Indo-Pacific'—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts a day-long conference on "Canada's Next Chapter in the Indo-Pacific." Among the participants are Malaysian High Commissioner to Canada Dr. Shazelina Z. Abidin; Japan's deputy head of mission Ishii Hideaki; 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 Collenette to Deliver Remarks—Former Liberal cabinet minister David Collenette 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, Metropolitain Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be provided. Details: nbennett@lunghealth.ca, 647-544-7314.


THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX INCREASE IS STILL SET FOR JANUARY 1, 2026.
The uncertainty of the incoming capital gains tax is impacting family-run grain farms across the country.
Canada's trade-enabling infrastructure is aging and crumbling, with chokepoints that have no alternate routes.
THE PORT OF VANCOUVER MOVES $35M IN GRAIN AND GRAIN PRODUCTS EVERY DAY.
70% OF CANADIAN GRAIN IS EXPORTED TO 160+ COUNTRIES, GENERATING $45B ANNUALLY.
Trade uncertainty with our two largest trading partners, the United States and China, has directly impacted farm revenues.
From farmgate to international customers, Canadian grain farmers are facing barriers that are holding them back and Canada's economy. It's time to clear the roadblocks:
➔ PERMANENTLY REVERSE THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX HIKE
➔ PRIORITIZE TRADE-ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE
➔ RESET CRITICAL TRADE RELATIONSHIPS
As the national voice for Canada's grain farmers, Grain Growers of Canada (GGC) represents over 70,000 producers through our 14 national, provincial and regional grower groups. Our members steward 110 million acres of land to grow food for Canadians and for 160 countries around the world, creating $45 billion in export value annually.
Grain Growers of Canada
Les Producteurs de grains du Canada
Learn more at GrainGrowers.ca