

Premiers' meetings need a reset:

McIntosh
p. 6

Exclusive news: inside

Pledge for civility as Parliament returns

p. 6

Nominations:

Ways to improve the process

p. 12



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NEWS

Domestic EV market needs more support following tariff on Chinese-made vehicles, say advocates

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Clean Energy Canada is pushing for an "all hands on deck" response from Ottawa, arguing that a recently announced 100-per-cent tariff on the import of all Chinese-made electric vehicles (EVs) needs to be balanced out by expanding existing federal programs intended to improve affordability of clean vehicles in the domestic market.

"We believe that this 100-per-cent tariff is going to, unfortunately, further restrict access to affordable EVs for Canadians," said Joanna Kyriazis, director of public affairs at Clean Energy Canada. "We're concerned that not allowing Chinese-made EVs into the Canadian market is going to further restrict access [to EVs], and box out competition that would otherwise help to drive EV prices down."

On Aug. 26, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University—Rosedale, Ont.) announced a 100 per cent surtax on all Chinese-made EVs, effective Oct. 1, 2024. This tax

Continued on page 17

NEWS

Trudeau left with 'fewer options' after NDP scraps agreement and campaign director quits, say MPs and political insiders



NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, right, announced on Sept. 4 that he's 'ripped up' the supply-and-confidence agreement with the Liberals. This means more uncertainty for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in terms of running the government and the timing of the next election. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

BY ABBAS RANA & STUART BENSON

With the NDP pulling the plug on their supply-and-confidence agreement with the governing Liberals, and the Liberals' national campaign director resigning, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's options to govern the country until October 2025 and winning the next election are be-

coming increasingly limited, say some MPs and political insiders.

"This is big," one Liberal MP told *The Hill Times* on a not-for-attribution basis to offer their candid views. "We're on thinner ice [now]."

On Sept. 4, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) dropped a bombshell on the Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) government that he has "ripped up" the



supply-and-confidence agreement made in March 2022. Singh made this announcement less than two weeks before the start of Parliament's fall sitting and two high-stakes byelections. The NDP could still work with the Liberals on an issue-by-issue basis.

In a minority government, an election is only one defeat away

Continued on page 19

NEWS

New return-to-office mandate for federal public servants kicks off as unions prepare telework campaign

BY SOPHALL DUCH

As the order for public servants to return to the office a minimum of three days per week comes into effect, the public service unions are preparing their members for a long-haul "battle" over remote work.

"It's not about the number of days. For a lot of workers, they want to go back to the office. And for a lot of others, they completely changed their lives around remote work," Alex Silas, Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) national executive vice-president, told *The Hill Times*.

In May, the federal government announced changes to the hybrid work model—upping it from two days in-office a week to three days. For executives, it's been upped from three days to four. The mandate came into effect on Sept. 9.

PSAC, the largest federal public service union, promised a "summer of discontent" over these changes. But now that summer has come and gone, and the union is looking to ramp up its telework fight ahead of the next round of bargaining in 2025.

"This battle is currently playing out in the fight for telework, an issue as crucial to our generation as the weekend was

Continued on page 18

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Christina Leadlay

Heard On The Hill

Author and journalist Stevie Cameron laid to rest in Toronto



Award-winning author and investigative journalist Stevie Cameron, pictured in 2007, died on Aug. 31, 2024, at the age of 80. *The Hill Times* file photograph

The funeral for award-winning author and investigative journalist **Stevie Cameron** was held in Toronto on Sept. 8.

Cameron died at home in that city on Aug. 31. She was 80 years old, and had suffered from Parkinson's and dementia.

Cameron was best known in political circles for her books on corruption and ethics on Parliament Hill in the **Brian Mulroney** era. Her first book, *Ottawa Inside Out*, was published in 1989, followed by *On the Take: Crime, Corruption and Greed in the Mulroney Years* in 1994. This led to her appearing at the House Ethics Committee in 2007 as it pored over the Mulroney Airbus Settlement. She also denied accusations by **William Kaplan** in his 2004 book *A Secret Trial: Brian Mulroney, Stevie Cameron and the Public Trust*, that she'd been an RCMP informant (the allegations were never proven).

Born in Belleville, Ont., Cameron studied the culinary arts, which led to her initial writing gigs at the *Toronto Star*, the *Ottawa Journal* and *Ottawa Citizen*. In the early 1980s, she moved into the *Citizen's* investigative journalism unit, and went on to report for the CBC, *Globe and Mail*, and *Maclean's*.

More recently, Cameron was involved in philanthropic work, including co-founding the Out of the Cold program for unhoused people at St. Andrew's Church in downtown Toronto where her funeral was held.

She is survived by her husband **David Cameron** and her daughters **Tassie** and **Amy**.

Minister Joly has a chat with *Chatelaine*



Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly** appears in the fall edition of *Chatelaine* magazine. *The Hill Times* photograph by *Christina Leadlay*

The fall edition of *Chatelaine* magazine has a feature interview with Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly** in which the 45-year-old former art dealer discusses her formative years, her failed attempt to become mayor of Montreal, and her growing personal art collection.

Key takeaways from the four-page story are that Joly and her husband **Félix Marzell** first met on a blind date set up by now-fellow cabinet minister and Montreal MP **Soraya Martinez Ferrada**, that the couple has undergone many rounds of fertility treatments in their quest to start

a family, and that hazelnut Ritter Sport chocolate is a go-to snack in her Ottawa office.

In the interview, Joly touches on threats to women in politics, saying she won't be cowed by bullies, and also avoided discussing her leadership ambitions, pledging her full support for Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**.

Manley and Hall Findlay round out Regent Debaters



Martha Hall Findlay will take part in the upcoming Regent Debate on Sept. 24. *Photograph courtesy of X*

Former Liberal deputy prime minister **John Manley** and ex-Liberal MP and leadership hopeful **Martha Hall Findlay** are the final two debaters in the upcoming Regent Debate, hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute.

Scheduled for Sept. 24 in Toronto, this year's Regent Debate is on the topic "Be It Resolved: Canada can turn a Trump Presidency from a threat into an opportunity."

Arguing in favour are author and businessman **Conrad Black**, and former New Jersey governor **Chris Christie**. Manley and Hall Findlay will be arguing against the motion.

Manley served as the Liberal MP for Ottawa South from 1997 to 2004, during which time he served in various roles in **Jean Chrétien's** cabinet, including minister of finance, industry, foreign affairs, and also as deputy prime minister. He ran for the Liberal leadership in 2003, but withdrew to support **Paul Martin**. Manley is now chair of investment banking firm Jefferies Canada.

Currently with the University of Calgary, Hall Findlay is the former CEO of the Canada West Foundation. She ran for the federal Liberal leadership in 2006 following **Paul Martin's** departure, but lost to **Stéphane Dion**. She served as a Liberal MP for the Ontario riding of Willowdale from March 2008 to May 2011.

Bob Rae to discuss UN work in Nova Scotia

Canada's ambassador to the United Nations **Bob Rae** will swap New York City for Halifax



Canada's ambassador to the United Nations **Bob Rae** will in Halifax on Sept. 11. *The Hill Times* photograph by *Andrew Meade*

this week to talk about the future of the global body.

The Canadian International Council is hosting the event at Dalhousie University, which promises to showcase "top Nova Scotia student debaters square off on the future of the United Nations." Rae will then respond to the debaters' points in a featured address to finish the evening.

Rae was first appointed as the country's envoy to the UN in 2020. In July, he was also elected as the president of the UN's Economic and Social Council.

The free event will take place on Sept. 11 from 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. local time. More information can be found at theic.org.

MLI launches podcast on Russian influence ops



Marcus Kolga hosts the new *Active Measures* podcast. *Photograph courtesy of MLI*

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute has launched a five-episode podcast series about Russia's information and influence operations in the West, with a particular focus on Canada.

Active Measures is hosted by journalist **Marcus Kolga**, and is a collaboration between the institute and DisinfoWatch, a Canadian group that monitors and debunks foreign disinformation.

The podcast series, according to a description on its website, "will look at the history of Russia's information and influence operations, how they've evolved since the cold war, and the rapid intensification over the past decade the reference to undermine

our democracies, to distort our understanding of Russia's war against Ukraine, and the Kremlin's attacks against those who are critical of it."

The first episode, which was released on Sept. 3, is about the **Igor Gouzenko** affair, the 1945 incident in which Gouzenko, a Soviet cipher clerk stationed at the country's embassy in Ottawa, handed over documents proving the existence of a spy ring in Canada. Kolga speaks with Professor **Amy W. Knight**, author of *How the Cold War Began: The Gouzenko Affair and the Hunt for Soviet Spies*.

Royal Society of Canada taps Béland as new fellow



Political scientist **Daniel Béland** has been elected as fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. *Photograph courtesy of McGill University*

Political scientist **Daniel Béland** has been named as one of the Royal Society of Canada's new fellows.

In a Sept. 3 press release, the RSC announced Béland and 103 others had been named fellows this year, while another 56 people had been named as members. The "mid-career leaders bring a multigenerational capacity to address major challenges and seize new opportunities, including those in emerging fields," according to the press release.

Frequently cited in *The Hill Times* and other publications for his insights on political science, Béland is the director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada at McGill University in Montreal.

Per his citation in the list of fellows, Béland "has illuminated public policy debates in Canada while reshaping the international scholarship on the role of ideas, policy feedback, territorial politics, and federalism. Widely cited internationally, his work has helped move the study of ideas to the forefront of the international field of comparative public and social policy research."

All new fellows and members will be inducted to the Royal Society of Canada College at a ceremony in Vancouver, B.C. on Nov. 8.

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Environmental group wants clean power regulations without delay, calls electricity sector concerns ‘scaremongering’

A final version of Clean Electricity Regulations, intended to help Canada achieve a net-zero electrical grid by 2035, are expected to be published later this year.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Advocacy groups are clashing over Canada’s planned transition to a net-zero electrical grid, with Electricity Canada arguing proposed regulations for clean electricity could lead to unreliable power for different regions, which the David Suzuki Foundation contends is a scaremongering tactic.

A final version of the Clean Electricity Regulations (CER), intended by Ottawa to help Canada achieve a net-zero electrical grid by 2035, is expected to be published later this year in the *Canada Gazette, Part II*.

In an ad campaign launched on Aug. 23, Electricity Canada argues that the current draft CER, published last year in August, represents a “one-size-fits-all” approach that doesn’t adequately consider regions with fewer natural resources for generating electricity, such as Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

In an interview with *The Hill Times*, Stephen Thomas, clean energy manager for the David Suzuki Foundation, described Electricity Canada’s campaign as containing attack ads that are “looking to delay or weaken the federal clean electricity regulations.”

He said that the response from Canada’s electricity sector to the CER reminded him of 2018 when the federal government announced a phase out of traditional coal-fired electricity by 2030.

“These industry associations, utilities, and fossil fuel companies, of course, were employing the same kind of rhetoric. They had attack ads,” said Thomas. “They were saying that this move was impossible. They said the sky would fall and that blackouts would happen, and when the regulations actually came into force, of course, that didn’t happen.”

Ottawa’s target for net-zero electricity by 2035 is shared with



Energy Minister Jonathan Wilkinson said ‘building out a clean electricity system will help us fight climate change and power a prosperous Canadian net-zero economy,’ in a Natural Resources press release on June 10. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

all of Canada’s G7 allies, according to Thomas.

“They all have made commitments to decarbonize their electricity systems by 2035, to phase out natural gas and other fossil fuels by that year, and in some cases, like the United Kingdom—a comparable energy system to Canada’s—they’re trying to decarbonize their electricity system and move off of natural gas even sooner, by the year 2030,” he said. “When we talk about regionality in Canada, places like B.C., Manitoba, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and to some extent Ontario have already really decarbonized their electricity systems [and] have a history of having access to large amounts of hydroelectricity and other clean electricity, and they’re doing just fine without very large amounts of natural gas.”

Thomas told *The Hill Times* that it’s been nearly three years since the federal government announced a commitment to reach a net-zero electricity system, and that the David Suzuki Foundation wants to see a finalized CER released by Ottawa before the end of this year.

“We need to have policy clarity for utilities, for system operators and for stakeholders across Canada to actually ... get the work done of cleaning up the electricity system and moving to that reliable, affordable, clean electricity grid,” he said. “Policy clarity is the thing that really is needed in Canada to unlock that pathway to clean electricity.”

In the ad campaign, Electricity Canada argues that proposed CER relies on technologies that

have either not been deployed anywhere in North America, or do not exist at all, and that some natural gas will be needed by electricity providers until the technology catches up.

Michael Powell, vice-president of government relations for Electricity Canada, told *The Hill Times* that representatives from the electricity sector are “genuinely concerned that the final regulations will move forward at a point where jurisdictions in Canada aren’t able to make it work.”

“People that run grids aren’t slouches. If they say that they can’t do something, then it’s because they can’t do it,” said Powell. “It might be the case that in five or six years ... that something new comes along and addresses these things, but it’s equally possible that those things don’t pan

out, and so a regulation has to be based on what’s achievable.”

Powell said the challenge for different regions in Canada is that there isn’t a “commercially available backstop” for some of the attributes that natural gas power plants currently offer.

“There’s no jurisdiction in Canada that sees a situation now where they have so much electricity that they don’t know what to do with it. Every jurisdiction is looking at unprecedented demand growth,” he said. “There is a need for additional flexibility to make sure that an independent system operator ... or grid operators elsewhere in Canada, are able to say, ‘Yeah, we can see a path where we are able to meet and comply with that.’ And the folks that are best positioned to do that are the ones that operate grids.”

Brandon Schaufele, director of the Ivey Energy Policy and Management Centre and an associate professor of business, economics, and public policy at the Ivey Business School at the University of Western Ontario, told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on Sept. 5 that, in regard to the differing opinions between Electricity Canada and the David Suzuki Foundation, “the truth likely lies in the middle.”

“As Electricity Canada highlights, there is a trade-off between reliability, affordability and decarbonization goals. The Clean Electricity Regulations have several provisions to address these concerns,” said Schaufele in the email. “Whether they are sufficient, as suggested by the David Suzuki Foundation, or too stringent depends on which mod-

elling assumptions one makes, in particular how much load growth (i.e., demand) one expects over the next 25 years.”

Schaufele added that electricity grids are inherently difficult to plan and manage, and in Canada, these difficulties are magnified by “important geographical endowments and interprovincial politics.”

“A core challenge for the Clean Electricity Regulations is that there are different affordability, reliability and environmental implications across the provinces. Existing electricity generation assets (i.e., power plants) in Alberta and Saskatchewan, for example, are relatively emissions-intense when compared with, say, generation in British Columbia or Quebec,” he said in the email. “Getting to net zero is therefore harder for these jurisdictions.”

Larry Hughes, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Dalhousie University, told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on Sept. 3 that, when it comes to transitioning the electricity grid, “it is a case of location, as it is with most Canadian energy issues.”

“Alberta got out of coal very quickly and opted for natural gas because it has ample supply. Saskatchewan appears to be doing the same thing, although there was a less than successful attempt at carbon capture and storage,” he said in the email.

In the email, Hughes said that, for the longer-term, both provinces are looking at deployment of small modular reactors, which are smaller in size and power output than traditional nuclear reactors.

SaskPower, the principal electric utility in Saskatchewan, announced an agreement with GE Vernova’s Nuclear business, GE Hitachi, on Jan. 30 to advance a BWRX-300 small modular reactor project in the province.

On Jan. 15, Capital Power Corporation, an independent power generation company based in Edmonton, entered an agreement with Ontario Power Generation to jointly assess the development and deployment of grid-scale small modular reactors to provide nuclear energy for Alberta.

In the email, Hughes said that whether deployment of small modular reactors in those provinces will be enough to bring down emissions intensity to proposed federal levels by 2035 “is anyone’s guess.”

Hughes added that it is true that wind and solar power are cheap sources of power, but “without something to address the variable nature of these sources to take their place at relatively short notice, there will be supply issues.”

“Hence the argument for natural gas or batteries or both,” he said in the email. “Electricity suppliers are forced to decide which are the most reliable, least expensive, with the lowest climate impact. Keep in mind that the climate is changing. This is already affecting, and will continue to affect, weather patterns into the future.”

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Stephen Thomas, clean energy manager for the David Suzuki Foundation, says Ottawa’s target for net-zero electricity by 2035 is shared with all of Canada’s G7 allies. Photograph courtesy of Stephen Thomas

News

Number of students in public service hits 10-year high as union warns against use as cheap labour

The federal student program remains 'a key recruitment priority' says the government, as it looks to shrink Canada's public sector.

BY SOPHALL DUCH

As back-to-school gets into full swing this month, a new report reveals there were more students pulling double-duty as public servants in the last year than at any time in the past decade.

But with the federal government looking to rein in spending, public service unions are warning against government departments turning to cheap student labour as a solution.

"We are strongly opposed to the use of students to either displace bargaining unit employees or to avoid filling bargaining unit positions," said Sharon DeSousa, national president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), in a statement to *The Hill Times*.

As of May of this year, the guidance for student rates of pay in the federal public service can range from \$18.42 an hour to \$37.53 an hour depending on a number of factors, including previous work experience and if the student is a university undergraduate, master's, or doctorate student. For comparison, the highest provincial minimum wage in Canada is British Columbia's \$17.40 an hour.

For the public service, not only are students a benefit as a cheap labour source, but also investing in them is prudent in case they stay on as public servants post graduation, say experts.

Class size

As of 2023, 9,203 students worked in the federal public service, according to the clerk of the Privy Council's latest annual report released two weeks ago—that's about 2.6 per cent of the entire public sector workforce.

There are three government pathways for undergraduate and graduate students to get into the public service. The most popular is the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP), as well as the Post-Secondary Co-op Internship Program and the Research Affiliate Program (RAP).

Other than a dip during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of students in the federal public service has been on a steady rise



Treasury Board President Anita Anand said the government will 'always ensure our public service remains well-staffed and efficient in delivering the quality services Canadians expect and deserve.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

over the last decade: there were about 4,605 students employed in the public service in 2013.

While the total headcount of student public servants has reached new heights, the actual percentage of students in the sector hasn't topped three per cent over the last decade thanks in large part to the growth of Canada's public service overall, which has seen roughly a 43 per cent increase from 2015 levels.

The total head count of federal public servants hit 357,247 in 2023, with early Treasury Board Secretariat estimates for this year projecting about 367,772.

Balancing the books

Treasury Board President Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.) is looking to shrink the sector to help with costs.

Anand kicked things into high gear when she sent her cabinet colleagues a letter last summer tasking them to help identify \$15-billion in savings by October 2023.

In Budget 2024, the feds unveiled their second phase of "refocusing government spending," which seeks to achieve billions in savings by forcing public service organizations to use existing resources to cover increased operating costs, as well as through the "natural attrition" of approximately 5,000 full-time public servants.

"We are simply looking at ways in which we can save money, cut red tape, and ensure our taxpayers dollars are allocated towards our government's priorities," Anand said in a scrum with reporters on April 17, the morning following federal budget day.

At last week's federal cabinet retreat in Halifax, Anand told reporters that her government would soon launch a working group to study productivity in the public and private sectors.

However, Anand said this overall review shouldn't affect services to the public.

"We will always ensure our public service remains well-staffed and efficient in delivering the quality services Canadians expect and deserve," Anand said in a statement to *The Hill Times*.

The kids are alright

Despite the plan to shrink Canada's civil service, the federal government said that student programs like FSWEP are "not currently under" the broader government spending review.

"These federal student programs remain a key recruitment priority for the [Public Service Commission] and the federal public service as a whole. We are continually working to enhance these programs to better align with the evolving needs of student applicants, hiring managers, departments, and agencies," said a PSC spokesperson in a statement to *The Hill Times*.

One of the "key recruitment" priorities? A more diverse and inclusive public service.

"I know that the program has gone through a lot of changes where people from equity-deserving groups, Indigenous people, people with disabilities are able to do the job. Because of changes in requirements over the years, there is a lot more people who qualify," said Wasiimah Joomun, executive director for the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations.

Those numbers are backed by the commission's annual report, which found gains in FSWEP hires who self-declared as Indigenous, a person with disabilities, a visible minority, and/or a woman.

PSAC also said they value students in the public service given many of their union members got their start as student workers.

"PSAC recognizes the importance and value in providing students with opportunities to gain work experience and skills through programs provided by the federal government," said DeSousa.

But she warned that "when students are exploited as low-cost labour instead of the purposes outlined under the Federal Student Work Experience Program, we have a problem."

FSWEP report card

Landing a gig in the public service could mean crucial work experience and networking opportunities for students, but a 2021 PSC audit found that some government organizations found it difficult to even hire students via FSWEP.

These difficulties resulted in some students being hired as casual workers instead.

The report said "[departments] and agencies indicated that they hired students as casual workers because this was the only way to hire a student they had met or had been referred outside of the FSWEP inventory."

Casual employment is meant to meet the short-term, unforeseen needs of governmental departments, and workers classified as "casual" can't work more than 90 days in a year.

So while casual work might be a quick way for students to get their foot into the door, the casual employment stream doesn't have requirements for a structured learning plan to complement a student's studies with on-the-job experience.

The Ottawa bubble

The public service's concentration in Ottawa is one of the challenges in hiring students—about 42.5 per cent of all public servants worked in the National Capital Region in 2023.

Thomas Klassen, a professor of public policy and administration at York University, said that students outside the capital region are at a disadvantage for being so far from the policy and political action in Ottawa.

"Some students that I teach, they say 'I'd love to work for the

federal government, but the kinds of jobs that I would be eligible for or interested in are in Ottawa, and for whatever reason I can't go to Ottawa.' So that's a problem," said Klassen.

A 2014 PSC audit report found that the highest number of student applicants and hires came from the capital's two main schools: the University of Ottawa and Carleton University.

But Joomun said an increase in remote work since the COVID-19 pandemic has helped increase access.

The public service's preference for bilingual candidates can also be a barrier for students outside the Ottawa-Gatineau area.

Klassen said that many of his Toronto students tell him that they would be more competitive at getting a federal government job if they spoke better French.

A competitive edge for students is crucial now more than ever given the current state of Canada's labour market, and with more students competing for fewer jobs.

According to Statistics Canada, the total number of post-secondary students in Canada now tops more than 2.19 million—it was 1.44 million at the turn of the millennium—but the employment rate for full-time students aged 20 to 24 has been dropping in recent years.

"We've had a lot more students, but the job market has not expanded to accommodate them," said Joomun.

A passing grade

While entry can be difficult, many students give a glowing review of the public service once on the inside.

The latest results from the Treasury Board Secretariat's 2023 Student Exit Survey found that 93 per cent of students surveyed had an overall positive work experience in the civil service.

The annual survey, conducted at the end of the summer student work term, also revealed that 84 per cent said they were given "meaningful work," and 91 per cent said they their experience provided them with valuable work skills.

Another 83 per cent said they would seek a career in the federal public service.

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Top 5 departments/agencies with the most students - 2023

Federal Dept./Agency	Number of students
Canada Revenue Agency	1,396
Canada Border Services Agency	736
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	505
National Defence	495
Environment and Climate Change Canada	483

Source: Treasury Board Secretariat

'All bets are off': Liberal-NDP rupture leaves 'the clock ticking' on Parliament's lifecycle

Jagmeet Singh's declaration that he has 'ripped up' the Liberal-NDP deal is like 'lighting a match and setting the bridge on fire,' says former Liberal staffer Olivier Cullen. 'There's no going back.'

BY IAN CAMPBELL

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh's abrupt departure from his party's deal with the governing Liberals will shorten the lifecycle of this Parliament, and put all political parties on a collision course when the House of Commons resumes in less than two weeks, say observers.

On Sept. 4, Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) announced that he had "ripped up" the supply-and-confidence agreement his party has had with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) and the Liberals since March 2022. The deal—which lasted about two-and-a-half years—was set to expire in June 2025, with the next fixed federal election date set for no later than October 2025.

Singh's move does not guarantee the government will fall immediately, but the Liberals must now seek support on an issue-by-issue basis to pass legislation and survive confidence votes. Under the current standings in the House of Commons, the government only needs support from any one of the three officially recognized opposition parties—the Conservatives, Bloc Québécois, or NDP—to have enough votes to prevail on any matter. To defeat the government, circumstances must align for all three opposition parties to vote against it.

As the parties gear up to return to the House of Commons on Sept. 16—the same day as two byelections are taking place in Montreal, Que., and Winnipeg, Man.—pollster Darrell Bricker, CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs, said "all bets are off" in terms of exactly how long the government may survive, and Singh has "started the clock ticking" towards an early election.

Singh's video 'looked like the beginning of an election campaign': Nanos

Singh announced his decision in an online video on Sept. 4. He did not hold a press conference or grant any media interviews, opting for a press conference the next day instead.



NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured at a November 2019 meeting, struck the supply-and-confidence deal in March 2022. On Sept. 4, Singh announced he had 'ripped up' the deal less than two weeks before Parliament's return and a pair of byelections. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade, illustration by Naomi Wildeboer

Pollster Nik Nanos, CEO of Nanos Research, said the video "basically looked like the beginning of an election campaign," with Singh trying to differentiate himself from the Liberals in particular, while framing the next election as an NDP-Conservative race.

In the video, Singh speaks directly to the camera, with a blurred shot of Parliament Hill behind him.

"Justin Trudeau has proven again and again he will always cave to corporate greed," says Singh. "The Liberals have let people down. They don't deserve another chance."

He then pivots to attacking Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.).

"There is an even bigger battle ahead. The threat of Pierre Poilievre and Conservative cuts," says Singh. "The fact is the Liberals are too weak, too selfish, and too beholden to corporate interests. ... They cannot beat the Conservatives, but we can."

Nanos said this move represents an inevitable step in the evolution of the supply-and-confidence agreement where Singh would need to distance himself from the government.

"It was clear from the beginning that [the NDP] couldn't one day be part of a parliamentary arrangement, and the next day wage war in a campaign against the Liberals," said Nanos. "They need some distance between the parliamentary arrangement and the election. So this effectively does that."

New Democrats worried they would 'sink' with Liberals: Bélanger

Former NDP staffer Karl Bélanger called the timing of the move "surprising" and said the strategy to announce the decision with only a video instead of a live announcement was "a bit peculiar."

He said it was difficult to tell whether the move was "just purely a communications strategy," or

if "there's something more principled behind it," given that observers would be "hard pressed to find something in the agreement that was not being fulfilled."

Over the agreement's lifecycle, several major pieces of legislation associated with the deal have been passed, such as anti-scab legislation supported by all parties. A dental care bill became law in November 2022, while a pharmacare bill is making its way through the Senate—though dental care is only partially rolled out, and the delivery of pharmacare is yet to begin.

Both parties have also dropped in the polls during the course of their agreement, while the Conservatives have surged to a 15 to 20 point lead across most polls for over a year.

Bélanger said it appears the NDP is concerned that continued support of the struggling Liberal government would cause New Democrats to "sink with them," and they were "trying to create some distance and create a contrast."

Bélanger said it's possible the two parties could still work together on some issues, but it will be difficult for the NDP to "extract concessions" while also convincing the Liberals they are willing to follow through on a threat of defeating them. He added the Liberals may not be willing to "play ball."

"They had an agreement, and the NDP broke it ahead of schedule, so that doesn't bode well for any kind of negotiations in good faith," he said.

Former Liberal ministerial staffer Olivier Cullen said Singh has left little room for supporting the government even on an issue-by-issue basis.

"It's like lighting a match and setting the bridge on fire," said Cullen. "There's no going back."

"How do you have proper political discourse and debate over topics when you just ended it like this? It's like a high school romance gone completely awry."

CBC News reported that the NDP had only notified the Liberals of their decision to end the

deal at 12:47 p.m., minutes before Singh's video was released at 1 p.m.

When the news broke, Trudeau was at a school in the small town of Rocky Harbour on the west coast of Newfoundland and Labrador where he was minutes away from making an announcement about his government's school food program.

He told reporters he was "not focused on politics."

"I will let other parties focus on politics. I'm focused on actually delivering the things that Canadians told me this summer they need," said Trudeau.

Cullen said the best strategy for the Liberals to keep this Parliament alive a little longer is to continue the business of "running the country" and "be the adult in the room."

"There's good things happening," said Cullen, pointing to the Bank of Canada's third consecutive rate cut—announced hours before Singh withdrew from the deal—and he said the Liberals should focus on these trends as a reason to keep governing.

"There's a bit of momentum after the summer," he said.

Former Conservative staffer Yaroslav Baran said Poilievre's public pressure on Singh to back out of the deal had "clearly" been effective, and "struck a nerve with the NDP base."

For months, Poilievre has criticized Singh for supporting the government. He escalated that pressure at an Aug. 29 press conference after he sent a letter to Singh calling on him to withdraw from the deal.

Baran said Singh had also likely received "an earful from his caucus members, saying, 'We're getting pounded at home on the doorstep,'" after spending the summer in their ridings.

He said the move represents a major "turnaround" from the NDP's position at the start of the summer to remain in the agreement, and that these types of changes only come from "significant pressure."

"You look at the polling, and then you connect the dots," said Baran.

Government will likely avoid confidence votes: Baran

Baran said the move will have several practical implications in the short term.

One is the government will now need to minimize confidence votes. Baran said this would likely take away the option of leading off the fall sitting with a throne speech which otherwise might have been an effective way to set the agenda for a final year of governing before the fixed election date. He said the government may also need to consider making the fall economic statement a true "fiscal update," rather than a mini-budget with policy measures in order to avoid needing to legislate their implementation.

Baran said the likelihood of a spring election is increased because when it comes time for Budget 2025 it will be "difficult for any opposition party to justify voting for the government's agenda," and then mere months later "run hard against that government on the hustings" in a fall campaign.

He said if the Conservatives want to try to bring about an election sooner, their best opportunity is to "leverage" opposition day motions by putting "poison pills" that will be difficult for the Bloc and NDP to oppose.

In a short press conference in Nanaimo, B.C., Poilievre addressed what he described as Singh's "stunt."

"The NDP will have to choose," said Poilievre, who indicated his party plans to move a confidence vote in the House of Commons as soon as it can.

Asked if Singh's announcement opened up new avenues for Conservatives to attempt to force an election, Poilievre replied: "It does, but it will depend on whether sellout Singh is serious or a stunt man. Will he vote for a carbon tax election at the earliest opportunity?"

In an interview on CBC's Power & Politics following the announcement, Government House Leader Karina Gould (Burlington, Ont.) left the door open to working with any of the parties.

"[Singh] even said in his press release that, you know, they're going to take this on a vote-by-vote, case-by-case basis," said Gould. "So I think there's still going to be opportunities for us to work with the NDP to advance areas of common interest."

"We're going to be open to working with the Bloc and maybe even the Conservatives because sometimes, you know, interests align," she added.

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The Hill Times

Opinion

A pledge for civility as Parliament returns

While some male politicians experience harassment and abuse, female politicians are disproportionately the victims of bullying and similar behaviour.

Senator Marilou McPhedran & NDP MP Lindsay Mathysen

Opinion



As parliamentarians return to Ottawa for the fall sitting in the House of Commons and Senate, we will be urging all those who have not yet signed the “civility” pledge against harassment and abuse on Parliament Hill to do so.

It is a pledge to support each other, and to call out abuse and harassment, to support women and those from equity-seeking groups in office, to uphold the highest standards of conduct, and to protect those who speak out or who experience abuse firsthand.

In June, just before Parliament rose for the summer recess, we



We need to make working on Parliament Hill a better place if we want to have more women and gender-diverse people working here, write Senator Marilou McPhedran and NDP MP Lindsay Mathysen. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

We need to make working on Parliament Hill a better place if we want to have more women and gender-diverse people working here.

Signing the pledge and committing to civility and more respectful debate is not a partisan issue. Many of our male colleagues across different parties agree we need to change course, and bring down the level of toxicity, harassment and abuse on the Hill.

There will be a federal election by or before Oct. 25, 2025. Before the recent summer recess, the spring session consisted of testy exchanges, name-calling, and bullying. We fear this abusive behaviour will continue to intensify as we get closer to the next election, and politicians try to score points with voters at the expense of the democratic institutions in which we serve.

We are determined to make Parliament a better place for all, to support each other, and to commit to constructive, respectful, and civil debate. If we don't, not only do we hurt each other and limit potential future leaders who will want to work on the Hill, but we will also further impact democracy as people dismiss running for office due to the toxic environment on the Hill.

Independent Senator Marilou McPhedran and NDP MP Lindsay Mathysen are co-chairs of the Canadian Association of Feminist Parliamentarians.

The Hill Times

reached out to all MPs and Senators to support the Canadian Association of Feminist Parliamentarians' call “for improvements to our workplace concerning harassment and civility.”

Since we sent that letter and pledge to our colleagues on June 18, very few MPs and Senators—less than 10 per cent—have signed it.

Unfortunately, the lack of civility in both parliamentary chambers and committee hearings is growing, making work on the Hill unpleasant. Member-to-member or Senator-to-Senator harassment hurts us as well as our colleagues, our staff, clerks, translators, visitors, and many others.

Some MPs—including Liberal MP Pam Damoff—have had enough and have decided not to seek re-election because of disrespectful dialogue and safety concerns. Damoff shared her story in May at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (PROC), which is looking at a review of the Members of the House of Commons Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy. As part of its study, PROC is also looking at recommendations on possible actions against parliamentarians who use taxpayer money—that is, employing (directing) staff, whose salary is paid by taxpayer dollars—to

post inciteful and hateful attacks against fellow parliamentarians on social media platforms. Unfortunately, this, too, is happening far too often.

In recent years, working on Parliament Hill has become very toxic. While some male politicians experience harassment and abuse, female politicians are disproportionately the victims of harassment, bullying and abuse. This increase in bad behaviour against women comes at a time when we desperately need more women to run for office, and to work in government. This toxic behaviour is not “parliamentary privilege,” and must stop.

Annual premiers' summer conference no longer lives up to original mission

Canadians seem to expect a lot from their federal government, but not so much from provincial counterparts.

Gord McIntosh

Opinion



The annual summer get-together of Canada's premiers is over for another year, leaving a legacy of, well, not very much.

In recent years, the Council of the Federation—as Canada's 13 premiers call themselves at their

summer get-together—has turned into a whinefest of fed-bashing.

This year in Halifax, the premiers complained Ottawa was interfering with their jurisdiction because the feds have chosen to deal directly with municipalities for funding new housing.

The council was founded in 2003 at the instigation of then-Quebec Premier Jean Charest so that the provinces and territories collectively could contribute to the overall interest of Canada.

Indeed, the premiers were doing just that in the beginning. In 2004, for example, the council negotiated the \$41-million, 10-year health accord with then-prime minister Paul Martin. In 2008, the premiers signed a preliminary agreement to end interprovincial trade barriers—something holding this country back since Confederation. In 2016, the premiers signed an agreement in principle to end them.

A year later, the provinces and Ottawa signed the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA). Interprovincial trade barriers remain a major economic problem. But it was a start.

Here are some suggestions how to return the Council of the Federation to the national forum of ideas that it once was:

Free trade in Canada: Trade barriers among provinces still stifle labour mobility, keep prices high, hold back productivity, and reduce government revenues—a continuing drag on Canada's economy.

Blame a huge volume of exemptions to trade rules in the agreement. Exemptions take up 130 out of 340 pages in the text of the CFTA.

At next summer's Council of the Federation, how about putting interprovincial trade barriers back on the agenda with the goal of cutting exemptions to just a few pages?

National housing policy: Housing is constitutionally part of the premiers' turf, just as municipalities are “creatures of the provinces.”

But to the feds, the current housing crisis is serious enough to ensure money for new housing gets to the municipalities as quickly as possible. Ottawa's impatience is understandable.

For years, the provinces demanded Ottawa limit itself to just providing money for housing and let them worry about implementation. The Mulroney government in 1986 agreed to get out of housing with some exceptions like funding co-op and public housing.

The problem was that the provinces never developed a viable national housing policy among themselves. Simply put, the provinces never delivered.

In 2017, Ottawa started to elbow its way back into housing with the National Housing Strategy once it was apparent the 1986 exit was a mistake. Perhaps the premiers should discuss delivering what they said they would by fully supporting the strategy.

Healthcare: The quality of your health care should not depend on your postal code. Nor should getting a family doctor be like winning a healthcare lottery.

The premiers need to discuss what they can do to providing uniform quality healthcare Canada-wide with strategies to fix

everything from primary care to emergency rooms and wait times. What about a national certification program that would allow physicians, nurses and nurse practitioners to work around the country?

Climate: Since wildfires are now a problem in more than half the provinces and territories, it was surprising the premiers had little to say about climate change this year.

Instead of leaving the climate crisis to Ottawa to address, the premiers could talk about taking a more active role cutting carbon emissions, and promoting renewable energy for cheaper electricity for their constituents.

In July 2023, Alberta was hit with a 128 per cent price increase in electricity costs year over year. And no, the feds had nothing to do with it.

Finally, Canadians seem to expect a lot from their federal government, but not so much from provincial governments. Lower turnout for provincial elections proves that.

The Council of the Federation has a secretariat office in Ottawa on Albert Street. Why not let the council know you would like to see more gravitas at next summer's meeting?

Gord McIntosh is an Ottawa-based writer and public affairs consultant.

The Hill Times

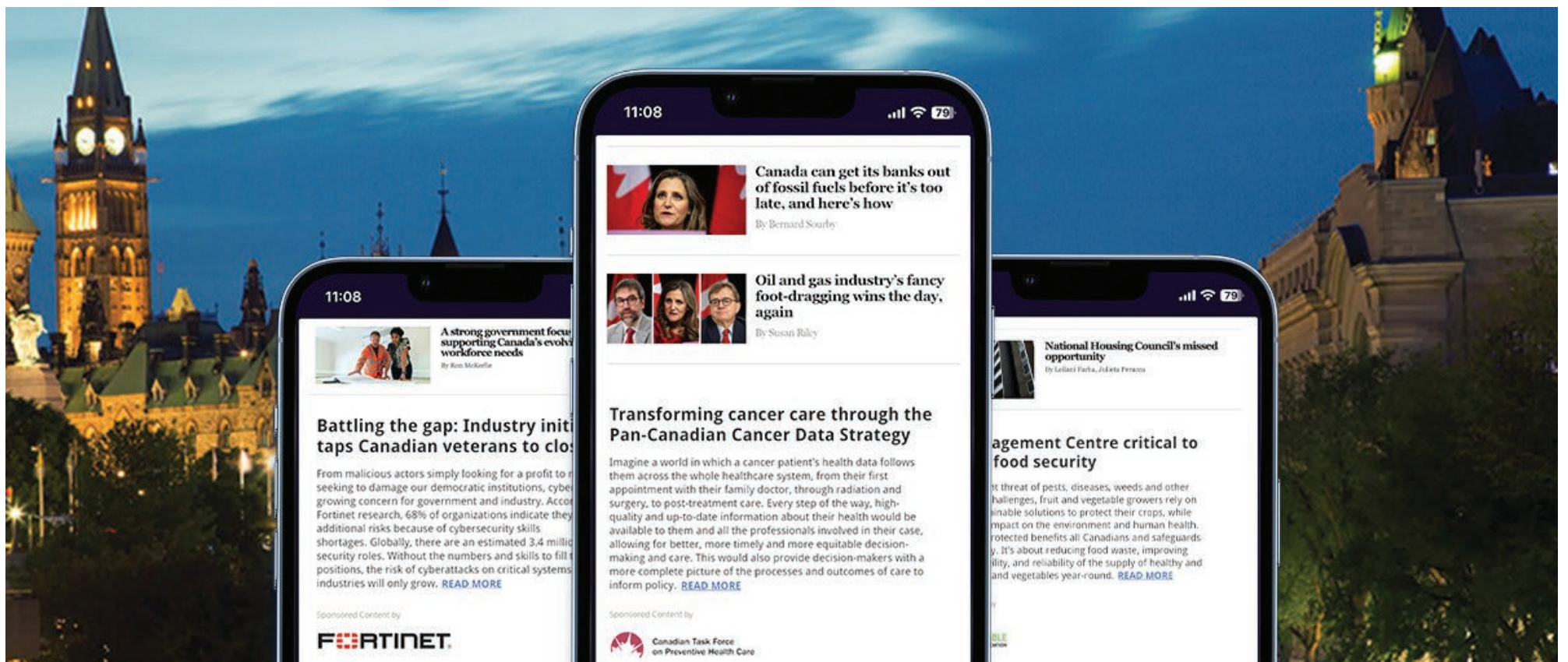
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Editorial

Farewell to the supply-and-confidence agreement

Much of the summer was spent speculating on how the Liberals would shake up the political landscape.

Would Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stay, or would he go? Would a nervous Liberal caucus—or a cabinet with potential aspirants to the role—force his hand? Or would he try to mollify his increasingly concerned ranks with a cabinet shuffle to provide a fresh, united front for the last year of this Parliament?

In the end, all signs of change coming from the red team were red herrings. Instead, it came from NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh who decided a week and a half before Parliament returns to tear up the supply-and-confidence agreement that has likely kept this minority session running as long as it has.

A little under two-and-a-half years after he signed the agreement with Trudeau, Singh called it quits and announced the split over social media on Sept. 4. Taking this increasingly common approach of making major announcements directly to supporters and bypassing the media means many questions went unanswered.

Why now? Why not wait until June next year? Will the NDP support a motion of non-confidence that the Conservatives will almost certainly move at the first available opportunity?

One thing we do know: Singh and the New Democrats will consider

voting non-confidence as being “on the table with each and every confidence measure.” On the one hand, this means nothing substantial could change if the NDP opts to continue backing the government on confidence motions.

But, for the first time since early 2022, it means that confidence backing is not guaranteed.

It’s possible Singh is thinking short-term. On Sept. 16, voters in Elmwood-Transcona, Man., will decide whether they’re happy with the NDP continuing to represent them, while electors in La-Salle-Émard-Verdun, Que., will choose whether to give the orange team a shot after years of Liberal representation.

By separating his party from the unpopular Liberal government, Singh could be offering those voters a point of difference that could tip both contests in the NDP’s favour. A positive outcome could mean the rest of the country heads to the polls much sooner than fall 2025.

On the other hand, both the Liberals and NDP are struggling to fundraise compared to the Tories’ money-making juggernaut. If the NDP loses confidence in the House, the party will be fighting a strong current.

Singh has bet that the fight—however difficult—will be easier without hanging on to the Liberals. Time will tell if his gamble pays off.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

The Canada Revenue Agency’s revoking of charitable tax status to the Jewish National Fund is indefensible, writes Hamilton reader Adam Sperber.
 Photograph courtesy of Pexels



CRA’s decision on JNF indefensible: Hamilton reader

Re: “JNF’s loss of charitable status justified by its conduct: Duchesney” (*The Hill Times*, Sept. 2, p. 8).

A recent letter writer celebrated the Canada Revenue Agency’s revoking of charitable tax status to the Jewish National Fund (JNF), a century-old Jewish organization, claiming that critics of the move are guilty of “the endless overuse of antisemitic accusations.”

I am not in any position to know the inner intentions of CRA, though I am curious why two Jewish organizations recently lost charitable tax status, and yet

a Vancouver-based organization, Samidoun, with demonstrated connections to a banned terrorist organization, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, retains non-profit status in this country.

Whether CRA is motivated by Jew-hate, anti-Israel fanaticism, incompetence, or simply an attempt to kowtow to anti-Israel extremists, is unknown to me.

But regardless of the motivation, CRA’s decision is indefensible and morally bankrupt.

Adam Sperber
 Hamilton, Ont.

Canada must continue to support global immunization: Ko

Reflecting on the significance of vaccinations allowed me to realize that my life was directly impacted by them.

When the coronavirus first hit Canada on Jan. 25, 2020, I was only 11 years old. My whole life was flipped upside down like a switch. The difference between my life and a switch was that a switch could be flipped back to ‘normal’.

In a blink of an eye, everything I had ever known, my life’s routine, was disrupted. I wasn’t old enough to understand just how devastating the pandemic was for everyone, but I did know one thing: people were dying.

It was horrifying to see the number of deaths pile up, but what scared me the most was that I couldn’t do anything about it.

Now that I am older, I acknowledge that I actually can do something—we all can. We must urge our country to continue showing support to global immunization.

We ask Canada to equip at least \$720-million to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance’s 2026-2030 Strategy, and to continue showing their support for the eradication of preventable diseases like poliomyelitis by dedicating C\$50-million annually to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative over the next three years.

We have all seen first hand what viruses like COVID-19 have done to us. We cannot let it keep happening to others.

Bernice Ko,
 Vancouver, B.C.



NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh ended the supply-and-confidence agreement with the Liberals on Sept. 4. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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Debate critical to Harris and Trump's chances

If Kamala Harris can make the case for her economic plan, and if Donald Trump's insults are caught on tape, she might continue her positive trajectory.

Sheila
Copp

Copp's Corner



OTTAWA—All eyes are on Philadelphia, Penn., as this week's U.S. presidential campaign debate pits former president Donald Trump against Vice-President Kamala Harris.

Harris' background as a prosecutor should stand her in good stead in terms of clarity and focus. Trump's tendency to ramble on with snippets of thought on

multiple issues will not shine in a debate format where there is a two-way conversation.

But it is difficult to predict the outcome as the majority of media pressure seems to be focused on Harris as a first-time candidate.

Much attention has been paid to Harris' first interview on CNN with her vice-presidential nominee Tim Walz. That interview, by Dana Bash, was not very hard-hitting, as the questions appeared designed to support the Harris candidacy, not challenge it.

As far as Canadians are concerned, the vast majority think Harris already has the election in the bag, and they support her. An Abacus survey last month showed that Harris has made a favourable impression on Canadians, with 48 per cent having a positive impression, while 21 per cent holding a negative viewpoint.

Trump is in the opposite situation, as 61 per cent of Canadians hold a negative impression of him—50 per cent hold a very negative impression. Only 24 per cent have a positive impression.

But the Canadian perspective is not what counts here, as we don't have a horse in that race. Canucks have a hard time

understanding why Trump is popular south of the border because, if the vote were being held in Canada, there would be no question that Harris would clobber him.

Not surprisingly, the only province reflective of the American trend is Alberta, where 33 per cent hold a negative impression of the current vice-president. The Harris negatives and positives in Alberta are statistically equal.

That parallels the finding that the majority of Liberal and New Democratic Party supporters in Alberta have a positive viewpoint of Harris.

Tories' negative and positive numbers in that province are equal, while 68 per cent of Liberals and 65 per cent of New Democrats feel positively about Harris.

Abacus findings are similar to those of other polling organizations that have consistently found more Canadians support the American vice-president than the former president.

Polling by Angus Reid reflected a gender trend that appears to be mirrored south of the border, as well.

According to a mid-August poll, two-thirds of Canadians

have a favourable view of Harris, with women being her strongest supporters.

Older women were most numerous in their support for the vice-president with almost 80 per cent claiming a positive impression of the Democratic candidate. Older men were positive, too.

But, as in the United States, Harris' biggest obstacle is winning over men under the age of 55. Some 40 per cent of this Canadian cohort described Harris unfavourably, calling her dishonest, arrogant, or corrupt.

Despite those naysayers, most Canadians believe that Harris will win the American presidential campaign, according to another recent poll by Nik Nanos.

Last March, Nanos polling showed the majority thought Trump would beat President Joe Biden. A swing of 24 per cent in the Democrats favour has propelled those numbers away from a Republican prediction of victory.

But Canadians' support of Harris does not translate south of the border.

The unique role of the electoral college means the popular vote counts less than where the vote is cast. Somewhat similar to a Ca-

nadian system where a candidate could win the popular vote and lose the election, a presidential candidate must exceed 270 electoral college votes in order to win the election.

Even with Harris' increase in the popular vote compared to incumbent U.S. President Biden, the electoral college splits put the election decision on a knife's edge.

The tight race increases the importance of this week's debate. If Harris can make the case for her economic plan and Trump's insults are caught on tape, she might continue her positive trajectory.

If she makes mistakes that can be magnified by the Trump campaign, her post-convention momentum could be stopped in its tracks.

My money is on Harris. I am in that group of older Canadian women—four in five of us—who have great hope for the election of the first Black woman as president of the United States.

Harris has constantly been underestimated, including during her work behind the scenes as Biden's vice-president.

She also has plenty of experience in taking on bullies, including California prosecutorial experience and the fight against America's big banks.

A debate victory could be her ticket to the White House.

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

The Hill Times

Will Liberals quit on Trudeau?

The real mystery isn't whether or not the prime minister will stay, it's whether or not his base will leave.

Gerry
Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKAVILLE, ONT.—When it comes to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, many journalists and pundits are asking the wrong question.

They're asking, "will Trudeau quit the Liberals?" when the more pertinent question is: "will the Liberals quit Trudeau?"

Why is that the more pertinent question? Well, first off, all the signs suggest Trudeau isn't about to pack it in anytime soon.

Despite all the consistently bad polls that show his party trailing the Conservatives by a large margin, he is still giving



Just because Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is willing to lead his Liberal army into electoral battle, it doesn't necessarily mean his troops will follow him, writes Gerry Nicholls. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

every indication that he's willing, ready, and able to fight the next election. We have to assume Trudeau will stick around.

As Howard Anglin, one-time deputy chief of staff to former prime minister Stephen Harper, recently wrote of Trudeau, "if he doesn't know by now whether he wants to go, then he knows he wants to stay."

Yet just because Trudeau is willing to lead his Liberal army into electoral battle, it doesn't necessarily mean his troops will follow him. Indeed, I suspect

many in Trudeau's camp are losing confidence in his leadership. Some have expressed this pessimism openly.

For instance, earlier this summer, after the Liberals suffered a stunning loss in the Toronto-St Paul's, Ont. byelection, former Liberal cabinet minister Catherine McKenna told the media she believed Trudeau should step down, saying, "the prime minister has a legacy to be proud of, but it's time for new ideas, new energy and a new leader. There is too much at stake in this election,

especially on the economy and climate."

Meanwhile, other Liberals have been expressing similar sentiments privately. Not too long ago, for example, one unnamed Liberal MP told the CBC they expected a number of their colleagues would not run again if Trudeau remains as leader.

As they put it, "The prime minister's leadership is damaged beyond repair at this point and the population just doesn't have time for him anymore."

True, the majority of Liberal MPs are still publicly supporting Trudeau's leadership, but as the saying goes, where there's smoke, there's fire.

That fire might turn into an inferno if the Liberals lose the upcoming byelection in LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Que. If that happens, it might trigger an exodus of Liberal MPs who, seeing the writing on the wall, will decide it's time to make a career change or to "spend more time with their families."

And it's not just Liberal MPs who might quit the party. It's also possible, if not likely, that Liberal donors will cut back on their financial contributions to the party.

As someone who has done political fundraising, I can tell you with grim certainty how hard it can be to persuade people to invest their hard-earned dollars in a cause that seems doomed to lose.

More importantly, some disillusioned or depressed Liberal supporters might quit by just deciding to stay home on election day.

Plus, there's also the strong possibility that some Liberal supporters might abandon Trudeau not for emotional reasons, but for ideological ones.

As a matter of fact, a group of Liberal Party staffers made headlines a few days ago, when they announced they would not participate in the Sept. 16 Montreal byelection to protest the prime minister's handling of the conflict in Gaza.

This is what happens when a party faces divisive issues. To govern is to make tough decisions, and making tough decisions can sometimes alienate people on your side.

After leading a government for nine years, Trudeau has had to make a lot of such decisions.

So yes, the real mystery isn't whether or not Trudeau will stay, it's whether or not his base will depart.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times

Opinion



While some might see NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh's exit from the Liberal-NDP deal as a risky move, he has positioned his party well, writes George Soule. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Singh's high-stakes gamble could pay off

Building on Jack Layton's legacy, Jagmeet Singh is betting that his vision—rooted in affordable housing, good jobs, and expanded health care—will resonate with voters who feel left behind by the Liberals and Conservatives.

George Soule

Opinion



There have been only two general elections—in 1988 and 2011—when New Democrats could legitimately claim to have replaced the Liberals as the alternative to the Conservative party of the day. Jagmeet Singh has made it clear he's working to make that happen again the next election.

For nearly two-and-a-half years, in exchange for helping Singh deliver on some of his key priorities to help people, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his minority Liberal government have been able to count on their supply-and-confidence agreement with the NDP to protect their grasp on power. But now, Singh says the Liberals have become too focused on their political survival, too tied to corporate interests, and too weak to hold up their end of the bargain.

In poll after poll, the Liberals are finding themselves with historically low popularity, and questions about Trudeau's leadership have become inescapable. Even members of his own cabinet, caucus, and staff say they don't trust him to lead them anymore.

Liberal MPs and ministers have told journalists Trudeau is dragging them down. His campaign director has quit because he doesn't believe Trudeau has a shot in the next election, per a *Toronto Star* report on Sept 5. And 52 political staff in Liberal ministers' offices are so unhappy with their party that they have refused to help the Grits in the current byelection in Montreal.

How can a prime minister convince Canadians he can negotiate trade deals and stand up for Canada when he can't even negotiate with or stand up to his staff?

As for Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, Singh argues he will make life more expensive and difficult for Canadians with cuts to health care, attacks on pensions, plans to scrap dental care, and the elimination of any plan for free—or even affordable—prescription drugs.

There's no mistaking the risk in Singh's strategy, but he's no stranger to being underestimated and having to prove his detractors wrong. Many doubted the strategic benefits of the supply-and-con-

fidence agreement, but from day one, Singh said his focus was on what Canadians need, and it's hard to argue with the results.

Singh secured the rollout of dental care, the implementation of national child care, paid sick leave and anti-scab legislation, and a plan to protect and create sustainable jobs, plus he got national pharmacare passed through the House of Commons. He made it possible for 11 million people to receive two additional GST rebate cheques to help cover the rising cost of everything. And while some conservative pundits try to minimize its impact, when the NDP dental plan is fully implemented, nine million Canadians will get free dental care. So far, over 2.3 million people have registered, and hundreds of thousands have been to the dentist, many for the first time. When the first phase of the NDP pharmacare plan is implemented, 3.7 million diabetics will benefit from free prescription diabetes medicine, and nine million women will have access to free birth control.

The Liberals have had every tool they need to get pharmacare

through the last stage in the Senate, but they're making Canadians wait.

Singh's message is clear: if the Liberals won't deliver, an NDP government under his leadership will. Like former NDP leader Jack Layton before him, Singh is offering hope and long-lasting relief.

Building on Layton's legacy, Singh is betting that his vision—one rooted in affordable housing, good jobs, expanded health care, and holding corporate giants accountable—will resonate with voters who feel left behind by the Liberals and the Conservatives. And with Trudeau and his party in such disarray, Singh's message is simple: Trudeau can't stop Poilievre, but Singh and the NDP can. He is framing the next election as a two-way race between Conservative cuts and NDP-led relief.

So, does this mean an election is imminent? Not necessarily. Singh has made it clear the NDP will now vote in the House on a case-by-case basis, and the Bloc Québécois is possible dance partner for the Liberals. But whether it comes tomorrow or a year from now, Singh's team is ready. And while some might see this as a risky move, Singh has positioned himself—and his party—well. He's holding the cards, dictating the terms, and playing the long game.

It's a high-stakes gamble, but one that just might pay off.

George Soule is a principal at Syntax Strategic and a former NDP director of communications. *The Hill Times*



After Hamas killed six hostages, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is facing questions about whether he should have done more to save them, writes Gwynne Dyer. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Netanyahu is Israel's curse

Israel's prime minister is playing for time with the war, using it to avoid his criminal corruption trials, and an inquiry into whether he could have prevented Hamas' brutal attack. The longer that's put off, the better for him.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



LONDON, U.K.—Six Jewish hostages were murdered by Hamas last week just before the

Israel Defence Forces reached them, and a controversy has erupted in Israel about whether Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should have done more to save them. But only among the ignorant and the credulous because everybody else knew he never intended to save them.

If your child is kidnapped and you get a ransom note, do you:

a) pay the ransom if you can possibly raise the money, informing the police only after your child is safe; or do you

b) ask the police to find and free the child, accepting the risk that she might get killed in the process; or do you

c) write the child off, as you have other priorities that take precedence?

Most parents would choose option A if they could afford it, and option B if they could not. Almost none would choose option C. But politicians are dealing with other people's children, and the calculations are different.

When Hamas fighters from the Gaza Strip attacked Israel last October, killing 1,200 Israelis

and taking 250 others back to the Strip as hostages, Netanyahu owed the latter group a duty of care, but it wasn't unlimited.

Option A was politically unavailable to Netanyahu. He could not afford to pay off the Hamas kidnappers because their price would be the complete and permanent withdrawal of all Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip.

In current circumstances, no Israeli leader could sell that outcome to Israeli voters, Netanyahu's coalition government would crumble, there would be a general election, and he would lose.

Option C was also off-limits, at least as an openly declared policy. He could not publicly write off the hostages as a lost cause because that was an emotionally unacceptable conclusion for a large proportion of Israel's Jewish voters.

For public consumption Netanyahu adopted option B: ask the police—or actually the army, in this case—to find the hostages and liberate them, although he must have known privately that

they would be killed before they could be rescued.

This is a reality that is often ignored by the hostages' families and their supporters. The kidnapers in this case are not random criminals, but trained and fanatical soldiers. They are holding the hostages in tunnels as much as 20 metres underground. Of course they will kill the hostages before Israeli soldiers reach them. There is no real option B.

These are the facts, and they would have forced Netanyahu to write off the hostages or accept a cease-fire even if he were a wise and honest man. He is neither, of course.

He is a man facing likely conviction in three criminal trials for corruption that have been interrupted because of the war. Conviction could carry a jail sentence, so he is in no hurry for the trials to resume.

He is a man who is playing for time because the longer the time between last October's Hamas attacks and the date when the inquiry opens into his responsibility for not preventing that disaster, the better for him. Something else might turn up: a Donald Trump election win in the United States, a war with Iran that drags the Americans in—anything that changes the subject.

Netanyahu is a man who, 11 months into the war, has yet to give a single hint about how he thinks the Gaza Strip should be governed when the war ends. Not even addressing the issue postpones the evil day when the reality of a ceasefire and a peace

settlement must be discussed and decided.

He wants to avoid that day because his coalition is critically dependent on an extreme right-wing party which relies on the turmoil of the war to distract attention from its campaign to drive as many Palestinians as possible out of the occupied West Bank.

"Today, we have power in the government," said National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, a leading light of that far-right group. "I'm not ashamed to say that we're using this power to prevent a reckless deal and to stop any negotiations altogether." To prevent any deal and any negotiations at all, in fact.

There were big pro-ceasefire demonstrations on the day after the murdered hostages were found, including up to five per cent of the Israeli population. There was a six-hour 'national strike' by the country-wide trade union Histadrut on the following day, but they tamely shut it down when the courts ruled that it was 'political.'

Netanyahu is Israel's curse, but he and his strategy are safe at least until the U.S. election in November, and a lot longer if Trump wins. Nothing President Joe Biden can bring himself to do or say in the meantime will change that.

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

The Hill Times

Only pushback from members will drive party leadership to loosen grip on nominations, say campaign veterans

'Most people will back out because they realize there's no point running if the leader doesn't want you there,' says former Liberal cabinet minister Sheila Copps.

IAN CAMPBELL & ABBAS RANA

To ensure free, fair, and transparent nomination contests, rank-and-file party members must communicate an unequivocal message to their respective leadership that they will not accept any interference from the top, say former candidates and party insiders.

"Within a party process, the membership should be able to make it happen," said Wayne Easter, a former nine-term Liberal MP and cabinet minister, in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "The membership has to push it."

Ahead of each federal election, nominations in all parties draw headlines when losing candidates accuse the central leadership of playing favourites. In other cases, senior party officials manipulate rules, but losing candidates stay silent because they don't want to burn bridges.

The stakes are high. In any riding that is considered a safe seat for a particular party, the nomination contest is more like the real election because the winner is almost guaranteed to become an MP.

Recent concerns that nominations are a "gateway" for foreign interference have further raised the stakes. In July, the Canadian Press reported on an Elections Canada discussion guide and briefing note it obtained through an access to information request. The documents outline possible new rules that Elections Canada may



Former Liberal MP Wayne Easter says 'the membership has to push' if it wants less central control of party nominations. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

suggest this fall to the public inquiry on foreign interference. However, the prospect of Elections Canada taking on a larger role in the nominations process has drawn mixed reviews from political players.

As part of an ongoing series on nominations, *The Hill Times* spoke with multiple party insiders, former MPs, and former nominations candidates. A previous installment looked at why nominations have long been known as the "wild west" of Canadian politics. This installment describes how these campaign veterans believe the process could be improved.

With the central parties maintaining a high degree of control over nominations—as well as collectively holding the legislative keys to make any changes to federal elections law—a seasoned political insider said there's only one way to press for fairer nomination contests: the membership must tell the leadership it won't tolerate unfair practices, and actively demand accountability.

The leadership of any of the major parties will never "touch any of this when the system benefits them," said the source, who spoke on a not-for-attribution basis in order to candidly offer their views.

Greater transparency would improve vetting process

The source said one of the key issues in the current nomination process is that, under federal election rules, the party leader must sign the nomination papers of winning candidates and submit them to Elections Canada in order for those candidates to run under a party banner.

Currently, political parties do not officially disclose reasons for disallowing a candidate during the vetting process. However, candidates often use party contacts to learn the reason.

The source said the ability of senior party officials to use the vetting process to eliminate can-



Former Liberal MP Sheila Copps says when the central party influences a nomination's outcome, 'you run the risk of having a candidate who doesn't have chops to win in the local election.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

didates they don't favour makes it difficult to hold these officials to account.

"People end up knowing reasons officially or unofficially. It's up to each party to decide how they want to communicate things," the source said. "If the answer is [the party leader] doesn't like you, then that's it. Do you really need a bigger reason beyond that?"

A senior Conservative told *The Hill Times* that political parties do not share their reasons for a disqualification in order to avoid the risk of being sued by the rejected candidate.

Easter said that he's not opposed to the vetting process, but political parties must ensure it's not used to unfairly block potential candidates. Everyone has likely said something they regret at some point in their lives, said Easter, but that should not always disqualify them from participating in the democratic process decades later. He argued political parties should avoid being short-sighted, and work towards making the nomination process more transparent.

If central party officials keep interfering, "you're going to continue to see our democracy undermined, and leaders should not be that short sighted," said Easter. "The parties themselves have to start thinking about how do you establish a good party base ... how do you get members that really represent the riding, not the leader?"

He said this may take time, and the push for such a change would need to come from party members, but this would be a key step to produce better nominations.

Sheila Copps, a former Liberal MP and deputy prime minister who was involved in a nomination controversy in 2004, said parties would sometimes benefit from allowing a nomination process that had less central influence because it may produce candidates better suited to win the riding.

"Most people will back out because they realize there's no point running if the leader doesn't want you there, or the hierarchy doesn't

want you there," she said. "But you run the risk of having a candidate who doesn't have the chops to win in the local election."

She pointed to Leslie Church who recently lost the Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont., byelection as an example. Church won the nomination over a single rival candidate, but she was seen as having the backing of the party which may have deterred stronger challengers, said Copps.

Rachel Gilliland, one of two candidates to raise concerns about the recent Conservative nomination race in Aurora—Oak Ridge—Richmond Hill, Ont., said she believes parties should be required to disclose to candidates the reason they were not being greenlit.

Gilliland did not receive her party's approval to be a candidate in the nomination election, and says she was not provided with an official reason.

She said she understands publicly disclosing the reason for rejecting a candidate could raise privacy concerns, but there should be a mechanism by which the party at least divulges the information to the candidate or their lawyer.

"It should be disclosed at a very high level to that candidate, so at least they are aware," she said.

Membership rules should be tightened

Easter said that changes made to his party's membership rules in recent years have not been positive.

When Easter first ran in the 1990s, Liberal Party members voting in a nomination contest were required to purchase their memberships three to six months in advance of voting. Now, candidates can sign up members right up until the party sets the cut-off date for a given nomination.

Easter added that it's a mistake for the Liberal Party not to have a membership fee, as anyone can be a member and take part in the nomination contest.

The 2013 Liberal leadership race—in which Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) was



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks to the Liberal caucus in West Block on April 17, 2024. Top party officials benefit from having a high degree of control over nominations, say veteran political insiders. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Longtime Liberal Party organizer Jack Siegel says 'the public would go nuts' at the cost of having Elections Canada run the election days for all party nomination meetings. *Photograph* courtesy of Blaney McMurtry LLP

Some of the ideas proposed in the draft Elections Canada document are for it to require parties to publish nomination contest rules, publish more complete voting results, and require all nomination contestants to file a financial return.

It also discusses limiting voting in nomination meetings to Canadian citizens. The document says "non-citizens may be more vulnerable to intimidation by a foreign state."

In an email to *The Hill Times*, Liberal Party spokesperson Parker Lund said "our party's constitution and by-laws are the result of thousands of Registered Liberals debating and voting at National Conventions over the years."

Lund pointed to the party's practices of allowing supporters to vote in nominations without paying a membership fee, and "expanding participation ... with respect to age and citizenship status" as key accomplishments.

"Our open and inclusive process ensures Liberal candidates can hear from more people in the communities they're running to represent, and helps foster civic engagement with those who may one day have the privilege to vote in a federal election," he said.

NDP National Director Lucy Watson said in a statement that the party is "proud of its fair and open nomination process." New Democrats "continue to find it unfortunate that Justin Trudeau and [Conservative Leader] Pierre Poilievre ignore their party's members, and appoint their friends," said Watson. The statement did not address specific questions about allowing non-citizens to vote, or other aspects of Elections Canada's draft document.

The Conservatives did not reply by deadline.

This is part of an ongoing series on the candidate nomination process.

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The Hill Times

elect leader—was the first time the Liberals allowed non-members to vote in a leadership race without purchasing a membership. After he became leader, Trudeau spearheaded further changes to the party's constitution that eliminated membership fees.

Bert Chen, a former member of the Conservative's national council—the party's highest elected governing body—said if the federal parties are serious about addressing flaws in the current system, they should commit to a unified set of rules across party lines.

One of those rules should address the issue of non-citizens voting in nomination contests, said Chen.

He advocates the parties should all commit to allowing only Canadian citizens and permanent residents to vote.

Some advocates of nominations reform have gone further, calling for only Canadian citizens to be allowed to vote in nominations, as is the case in federal elections.

Currently, the Conservatives allow citizens and permanent residents to buy memberships and to vote in nominations. The Liberals and NDP allow any resident of Canada to do so.

Chen said the rules regarding citizenship status are why there have been allegations of winning candidates busing in international students to obtain their votes. In some cases, there have been allegations that political parties were aware of this practice, but looked

the other way. Whatever rules the parties establish should be applied consistently to everyone, and should ensure that only individuals with citizenship status are eligible to vote, said Chen.

At the public inquiry on foreign interference, Independent MP Han Dong (Don Valley North, Ont.) conceded that a bus of international students whom he said were likely from China, and whose school he had visited during the campaign, had voted in his 2019 nomination contest for the Liberals.

Chen also called for shared rules that commit to "making sure people are not members of multiple parties" when they vote in nominations.

He noted all parties state that members cannot join any other federal party. However, he said, presently there is no way to enforce this.

Getting Elections Canada involved sparks debate

Some nomination veterans consulted by *The Hill Times* were open to Elections Canada or another third-party organization playing a greater role in the nomination process, while others were strongly opposed. But even among those who support an expanded role there was not a singular vision on what that should look like.

Copps said it is not unreasonable to expect parties to submit to greater regulation from Elections Canada because they receive public funds.



Rachel Gilliland, who did not receive her party's approval to seek the Conservative nomination in Aurora—Oak Ridge—Richmond Hill, Ont., says parties should be required to provide candidates with a reason if they are rejected. *Photograph* courtesy of Rachel Gilliland



Former Conservative National Council member Bert Chen says there should be a unified set of rules across party lines. *Handout photo*

"All parties survive on publicly registered money, and all parties get donations and are dependent a bit on the public purse," she said.

Copps said it would be useful if parties were required to publish their nomination rules with Elections Canada so there is greater transparency about the process, and more clearly defined rules around the dates for membership sales cutoffs, which she described as "a moving target."

It remains up to the party at any time to decide when it will hold the nomination for a given riding, and what the membership sales cut-off date will be.

Presently, rules related to party membership and the nomination process are published in the con-

stitutions and bylaws of federal parties, and are generally available on the national party's website.

However, in a review of more than 1,300 riding association websites, less than one per cent provided basic information about how to become a candidate of a political party, wrote authors Alison Loat and Michael MacMillan, founders of the Samara Centre for Democracy, in their 2014 book *Tragedy in the Commons*.

They found that about six per cent of the websites included names of local party executives, and less than five per cent had details about meetings.

"At a bare minimum, parties should post clear nomination processes online to indicate how one

goes about becoming a candidate, and how a citizen can get involved," wrote the authors.

Gilliland sees another possible role for third-party oversight. She said either Elections Canada or a similar entity should run the election day process for nominations.

"Elections Canada or a third-party election institution should have a hand that's non-partisan to manage some of this so there is some trust in the democratic process," said Gilliland.

However, Jack Siegel, a lawyer who has served as a Liberal organizer for decades—including as Ontario campaign co-chair—made the case that having Elections Canada take on that responsibility is logistically and financially impractical to the point the public would never support it.

Under the new federal riding boundaries, there will be 343 federal ridings. With at least four parties in the House of Commons that field candidates across Canada, plus the Bloc Québécois fielding candidates throughout Quebec, Elections Canada would be on the hook to administer well over 1,000 nomination meetings just for those parties, said Siegel. It would be responsible for many more if it took on running the meetings for all of the smaller parties registered under the Canada Elections Act as well.

"The cost would be insane, and the public would go nuts," said Siegel, who noted it can take as many as 75 party volunteers to run a nomination meeting in a riding that has a few thousand members.

Comment

Canada sends message that we are part of 'America First'



Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland has said that ongoing talks could lead to additional protectionist measures in other sectors, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

On EVs, the feds ignored the process of implementing trade defensive measures, and instead adopted a secretive process to simply appropriate an arbitrary U.S. policy.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—In imposing a 100-per-cent tariff on Chinese electric vehicles, along with additional penalties on Chinese steel and aluminum, the Trudeau government has helped reinforce the widely-held international image of Canada as an American vassal.

That is an image reinforced by the eager support for these trade measures by the opposition Conservative Party, as well. This is

one of Canada's few bipartisan policies.

Despite lip service to the rules-based World Trade Organization (WTO), Canadian fear of the United States, and the country's deep integration into the U.S. economy meant matching a highly protectionist U.S. policy would be a much higher priority than supporting a rules-based global trading system.

The European Union has not adopted the U.S. policy. Instead, it is pursuing its own, one consistent with WTO rules and based on an open, transparent and evidence-based approach.

International reaction to Canada has been severe. In the *Financial Times*, the paper's trade policy watchdog Alan Beattie wrote that there had been much disappointment among trade experts on the way Canada imposed penalties on Chinese EVs.

"A lot of the disappointment among trade folks is the way Canada did it, with no apparent attempt to find a way of making it compatible with WTO rules, for example by playing around with the rules on trade defence measures," Beattie wrote.

"Canada has traditionally prided itself on its multilateralism: a

group of countries pushing for reform of the WTO was convened in Ottawa in 2018 and bears its name. That claim now looks a bit empty."

This Canadian initiative is the so-called Ottawa Group of countries, which intended to reform and strengthen the WTO.

China has said it will bring a WTO case challenging Canada's imposition of harsh tariffs, which, Beattie argues, it "will probably win". If China wins, he argues, "Canada will look even more blatantly hypocritical if it fails to comply."

Writing in his *Most Favoured Nation* Substack, British trade policy expert Sam Lowe argued that the shock isn't that Canada ended up imposing tariffs, but that "it has, unlike the EU, decided to go full Trump/Biden and disregard trade rules entirely and follow the U.S.'s approach to the letter."

Based on Canadian fear of the U.S. this may even have made sense, Lowe says, "but if you care about the rules-based trading system...less good."

The right approach would have shown Canada acting as a more sovereign nation, but the outcome could easily have

displeased the U.S., a country accustomed to getting its way. It would have meant following and obeying Canadian trade law.

Canadian trade law is clear and it is consistent with our WTO obligations. This is the rules-based system, but one our government is now undermining. With the first Canadian electric vehicles yet to come into production, and with a projected selling price of more than \$50,000—far beyond the reach of most consumers—the government had ample time to pursue a formal trade investigation under the Special Import Measures Act following a determination by the Canada Border Services Agency into whether Chinese electric vehicles are subsidized (they are).

The Canadian International Trade Tribunal would then investigate to determine whether Chinese subsidies were likely to cause material injury to the Canadian industry by "retardation" of the development of electric vehicle production in Canada, and if so, what penalty should be imposed. There would also be an expiry date, so that the defensive measures would only last for a specified period of time, subject

to an extension based on a formal review.

However, our government ignored the established legal—and transparent—process of implementing trade defensive measures, and instead adopted a secretive process under a rarely-used Canadian law to simply appropriate an arbitrary U.S. policy. This undermined the WTO system, and eliminated any kind of due process that would have allowed Chinese electric vehicle producers to present their own evidence and ensure a fair hearing.

Even more trouble could lie ahead. Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland has said that ongoing consultations could lead to additional protectionist measures in other sectors, including battery parts, semiconductors, solar products and critical minerals—the same products as on U.S. hit lists. But, as with EVs, there is no mention of following transparent WTO-consistent procedures. Instead, the policy will be based on closed-door "consultations" which exclude the public but benefit business lobbyists seeking protection.

China has announced, in the meantime, that it will pursue an anti-dumping investigation into Canada canola shipments, a business worth \$5-billion to Canadian farmers and processors, as well as seeking a WTO case to investigate our 100 per cent EV tariffs, with the prospect of a WTO finding that we broke global trade rules, and imposition of a penalty for doing so.

From the Chinese perspective, this has already driven a wedge between Western Canada—where the canola industry is based—and Ontario and Quebec, where the EV, steel, and aluminum industries are located.

Writing in the *Globe and Mail*, a former Global Affairs Canada China expert argued that "Ottawa's use of unilateral tools to implement 100-per-cent tariffs on EVs is a hallmark of a trade war. Top this off with the politically charged rhetoric Canada had used, we shouldn't be shocked when China has responded in kind." Jeff Mahon, who is now the director of geopolitical international business advisory at the consultancy Strategy Corp., contended that "by acting rashly and inviting such retaliation, the Canadian government has effectively sacrificed Western interests for those of Ontario and Quebec."

He accused Canada of "blindly following the U.S.'s approach, not only in matching its 100-per-cent tariff but also using unilateral tools to do it."

Barely a month ago Global Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly travelled to China in the hope of taking at least the first small steps to restoring a better Canada-China relationship. A few weeks later, with its 100 per cent tariffs on Chinese EVs while evading WTO rules, Canada sends the message that we are part of "America First."

If there is a strategy here, what is it?

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The Hill Times



The Canada Revenue Agency's recent decision to revoke the Jewish National Fund's charitable status is rife with anti-Israel bias, writes Victoria Mancinelli. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

By attacking the Jewish National Fund, the government sends a clear message

A country that prides itself on moral values and welcoming diversity no longer seems to extend those values, rights, and safety to the Jewish community.

Victoria Mancinelli

Opinion



It's been more than 10 months since the horrific terrorist attack committed by Hamas against Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. Since then, I regularly get asked about why I am so outspoken about the rise of antisemitism in Canada.

My response is always the same: how could I possibly stay silent?

From a young age I was taught the importance of all aspects of community building. At LiUNA, building safe, strong, and inclusive communities is who we are at our core. It is a legacy of the

giants like my grandfather, who came to this country to build a better life for their families at a time when there was little support and much prejudice, a hatred we still see the Jewish community facing today.

We have supported the Jewish National Fund (JNF) for more than 50 years, sharing a strong foundation of building, connecting, and protecting communities across our respective countries. I am proud to be a third-generation friend and ally to JNF: first established by my grandfather, Enrico Henry Mancinelli; and carried forward by my father, Joseph Mancinelli, two giants of the labour movement who have dedicated their lives to community advancement with the shared mission of JNF: unity, respect, safety, and prosperity.

Their first-hand experience in Israel in the early 1990s has led to a deep understanding of the democratic state, seeing beyond historic and current campaigns of misinformation and hateful propaganda, which are fuelled by bigotry as a means to justify the incitement of violence and harassment of the Jewish community out of our civil society.

The recent decision by the Canada Revenue Agency—and, frankly, this current government—to revoke the JNF's

charitable status is rife with anti-Israel bias. Some may argue that this decision is not political, which is not only offensive to our intelligence, but also a grotesque display of our moral clarity on full collapse.

The JNF was established in 1901 during the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. Since 1948, JNF has focused on afforestation, water management, and environmental conservation playing a vital role in shaping Israel's landscape, and supporting its agricultural development.

Beyond that, JNF provides social programs and services for Israelis of all backgrounds, from building bomb shelters in playgrounds to keep all kids safe, to building a resilience centre in the southern Israel town of Sderot for all residents impacted by terrorism, to shelters for abused women from all religions and ethnicities—a cause very close to my heart with my work here in Canada.

The most alarming part of this decision is its impact on Israeli civilians' safety.

This is painfully obvious in northern Israel where, over the past 10 months, more than 1,000 Hezbollah rockets and missiles have had a significant impact on communities near the Lebanon-Israel border.

This terror has forced residents into bomb shelters, disrupted daily life, burned 30,000 acres of land and destroyed people's homes. This terror culminated in the killing of a dozen children on July 27 when a Hezbollah rocket struck a soccer field in the Druze village of Majdal Shams.

JNF was preparing to build a rocket-safe, reinforced school in this area so children could return safely when the CRA announced the revocation.

This politically motivated decision brought that noble effort to a halt, putting the lives of children in Israel's north at risk of facing the same violence and Hezbollah terror, and condemning them to an uncertain future.

It's hard not to see the bias in the government's decision through its own actions.

CRA has operated in a manner contrary to their standard practice, moving ahead with the revocation instead of waiting for legal proceedings to conclude, and a decision to be delivered from the court. CRA has refused to engage in dialogue with JNF. CRA has refused to hold anti-Israel organizations to the same standard, including those which openly support terrorism, one very notable organization being Samidoun.

Samidoun and its leaders in Canada are known to have connections to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a designated terrorist group in Canada, the United States, and the European Union known for a history of violent attacks, including hijackings and bombings.

Samidoun in Canada continues to freely provide a platform for promoting extremist ideology, while maintaining its federally registered non-profit status. Charlotte Kates, the international co-ordinator for Samidoun based in Vancouver, B.C., was arrested in May following a speech praising the events of Oct. 7, 2023.

Kates made news last month when she travelled to Iran to

receive a "human rights award" from Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Eje'i, the head of the country's judiciary. Mohseni-Eje'i was sanctioned by the U.S. in 2011, and presided over the arrest of tens of thousands of "Women Life Freedom" protestors—many of whom were executed.

The hypocrisy of allowing an organization to operate in Canada headed by a woman who glorifies terrorism and received the same award as the likes of Ismail Haniyeh—the former head of Hamas' "political bureau"—and Mohammad Reza Zahedi—a former top officer in the banned Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps—while targeting a Jewish group is contrary to everything we in Canada should stand for.

I was fortunate to visit Israel on a LiUNA Delegation in 2016. I saw first-hand the impact that JNF and LiUNA had on helping support those in need from all backgrounds, which is a testament to our collaborative efforts in coming together with the shared goal of building up resilient communities on the basis of peace and prosperity.

On the other hand, over the last 10 months, antisemitic hate has been emboldened in our country. A country that prides itself on moral values and welcoming of diversity no longer seems to extend those values, rights, and safety to the Jewish community.

This horrific targeting of JNF being just another example of the moral failing of our government to stand with them, while at the same time making Israel less safe by preventing JNF from being able to do the crucial work they do. What message does this send to our allies not just in Israel, but around the world about expecting Canada to stand by their side in times of need?

Victoria Mancinelli is the director of public relations, communications, marketing and strategic partnerships at LiUNA C&E Canada.

The Hill Times

Opinion

Forced transfers have a negative impact on MAID practitioners who care deeply about providing end-of-life care consistent with a patient-centred approach, write Norma Greenaway and Sherry Moran. Photograph courtesy of Pixabay



MAID legislation not implemented: forced transfers for the terminally ill

Too often patients are being forced to leave the publicly-funded hospitals or hospices where they have been receiving end-of-life care because those institutions refuse to allow medically-assisted death on their premises.

Norma Greenaway & Sherry Moran

Opinion



Many gravely ill people who have been approved for a medically assisted death in Canada (MAID) are being deprived of their wish for a peaceful exit surrounded by loved ones. Instead, their agony is being prolonged. Too often they are being forced to leave the publicly-funded hospitals or hospices where they have been receiving

end-of-life care because those institutions—often citing “religious beliefs”—refuse to allow MAID on their premises.

The impact of such forced transfers on terminally ill patients is heartrending. It is happening across Canada, but we are focusing on Ontario.

Here are a few real-life examples, as reported by doctors, of what people have experienced in this province.

When a dying patient suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease was told he would have to be transferred out of the Catholic hospital where he was located in order to get MAID, he was found dead the next morning with his oxygen nasal prongs in his hand.

An elderly man suffering from terminal cancer was upset and confused when told he would have to be transferred out of the Catholic hospital where he was a patient to die with MAID. “But I am not Catholic,” he said.

Another man suffering from metastatic lung cancer resulting in spinal fractures was transferred home in a sitting position. The hospice where he was residing did not allow MAID. “He was nearly unconscious, in agony, sweating and just begging me to ‘get it done’ as fast as possible,” the doctor who provided MAID recalls.

While most MAID deaths are bittersweet, and allow time for acceptance, goodbyes, forgiveness, and even laughter, forced transfers add unnecessary brutality to the equation.

“My transferred patients have been the most anguished, and were truly harmed by the very system they have paid taxes to their whole lives,” an Ontario MAID clinician says in despair.

So the horrors faced by patients and their families because of forced transfers also have a negative impact on MAID practitioners who care deeply about providing end-of-life care consistent with a patient-centred approach. Watching medically unnecessary transfers that impose unbearable physical and psychological suffering on their patients goes against practitioners’ own values.

Our Charter right to an assisted death was recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada in the Carter case in 2015. The federal government passed the first MAID legislation in 2016. Since that time, it has been legal for Canadians whose natural death is reasonably foreseeable—and who meet the other eligibility requirements—to choose MAID.

The law clearly does not envision forcing people suffering from end-stage cancer and other painful conditions to relocate

from their sick beds in hospitals and hospices to get the procedure.

A claim was filed in Vancouver on June 17 to end the practice of forced transfers at faith-based institutions in British Columbia. Dying with Dignity Canada—the human rights charity advocating for end-of-life choice—joined forces with Dr. Jyothi Jayaraman and the Estate of Sam O’Neill in suing the British Columbia government in an attempt to ensure access to MAID in all B.C. health care facilities.

This court challenge is made on behalf of many vulnerable patients, but was inspired by the forced transfer of Sam O’Neill, who died of cancer last year at the age of 34. O’Neill had chosen MAID, but was denied this dignified death as a resident of Saint Paul’s hospital in Vancouver, B.C.

To manage her pain, O’Neill had to be sedated for her transfer to premises where she could have MAID, but she never woke to say a final good bye to her family. On the day of the court filing, her parents said: “Sam suffered because her beliefs did not align with that of a religious group. There was no peace in Sam’s passing. It was violent and cruel.”

At the time, Health Minister Adrian Dix declined to comment to media with the matter before the courts, while Providence Health Care told *The Globe and Mail* it was reviewing the court filing, but works with Vancouver Coastal Health so that MAID requests follow the province’s rules and are addressed in a timely and safe manner.

There is a vast difference between a sacred space such as a church, synagogue or temple, and a publicly-funded building such as a hospital, hospice or long-term care residence.

Canadians who are approved for MAID should not have to consider whether the hospital or other facility where they get their care from will perform MAID; it should simply be provided in all publicly-funded health care facilities. Sadly, there are hospitals and hospices in Ontario that do

not provide MAID, and ironically, some hospitals that support MAID, but will not accept patients transferring for the purpose of receiving MAID. This means that many terminally ill patients, especially those located in rural areas or small towns, are forced to be transferred away from their family and friends to access their legal right to a MAID death.

There are provinces that have moved to mitigate the impact of forced transfers. The Quebec government is once again ahead of the others in amending its *End-of-Life Care Act* to require all publicly-funded health care facilities that provide end-of-life care to include “medical aid in dying”. Nova Scotia’s Health Authority also requires all publicly-funded facilities to allow access to MAID, but it still took enormous effort by key regulatory stakeholders to get one of their faith-based hospitals to provide a room for the provision of MAID. This is similar to the single room in a faith-based hospice in Vancouver allowed for MAID, after much time, money, and effort expended by the local MAID team. But these are stop-gap measures that continue to stigmatize MAID deaths and require forced transfers, whether down the hall or across the city.

Many argue that the best solution is the Quebec approach whereby publicly-funded health care facilities are required by law to allow MAID on site. Any staff on the premises would continue to have the right to conscientiously object to being involved in this end-of-life procedure, but the building does not get a pass.

Others simply argue the Ontario government should use the power of the purse. As one MAID clinician summarized the argument: if you get a dollar of public money, you must provide all legal medical services, including MAID.

Three-quarters of Canadians say publicly-funded health care facilities should be required to provide the full range of health care services, including MAID, if they have the proper staff and equipment. This majority includes 73 per cent of those who identify as Catholics, and 63 per cent as Protestants.

Our tax dollars fund health care facilities, so it is our right to have the personal choices we make about end-of-life care respected at all facilities. We are asking Ontarians to call or write to their MPP to let them know that they feel strongly that all publicly-funded health care facilities—faith-based or not—must allow all legally available health care services, including MAID, on their premises.

Norma Greenaway is retired following a journalism career in the Middle East; Washington, D.C.; Ottawa; Toronto; and Saskatchewan, as well as teaching at Carleton University’s School of Journalism. Sherry Moran is a retired lawyer and public service executive who has served on many charitable and non-profit boards of directors over the past 25 years, including that of *Dying with Dignity Canada*.

The Hill Times

Domestic EV market needs more support following tariff on Chinese-made vehicles, say advocates

A 100-per-cent surtax on all Chinese-made EVs will come into effect on Oct. 1, and a 25-per-cent surtax on imports of steel and aluminum products from China will begin Oct. 15.

Continued from page 1

will be on top of the existing 6.1-per-cent “most-favoured nation” import tariff that applies to countries that do not have a free trade agreement with Canada, including China. Freeland also announced a 25 per cent surtax on imports of steel and aluminum products from China, effective Oct. 15.

Kyriazis told *The Hill Times* that Clean Energy Canada is not opposed to tariffs, but would have preferred “a more nuanced approach.” As an example, she cited Europe, which has implemented tariffs ranging from nine per cent on Chinese-made Tesla EVs, to about 36 per cent on vehicles by SIAC Motor.

In a Aug. 26 press release, Clean Energy Canada raised concerns that the 100-per-cent tariff could result in a “chilling” effect on EV sales, and could drive up EV prices while also slowing adoption of EVs in the near-term.

To help with availability of less expensive EVs in Canada, Kyriazis said her organization is advocating for the federal government to launch an EV affordability package, which includes extending the life of the current



Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland said in a Finance press release that the Liberal government “is moving forward with decisive action to level the playing field, protect Canadian workers, and match measures taken by key trading partners.” *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Incentives for Zero-Emission Vehicles (iZEV) program.

The federal iZEV program, launched in May 2019, offers rebates of up to \$5,000 for Canadians who buy or lease a zero-emissions vehicle. The program is set to continue until March 31, 2025, or until available funding has been exhausted.

Kyriazis said Clean Energy Canada is asking for the program to be extended an additional three years.

“If our goal is to support Canadian-made EVs, right now there are basically no Canadian-made EVs to benefit from that program,” said Kyriazis, adding that the only passenger EV currently made in Canada is the Chrysler Pacifica plug-in hybrid minivan. “Even when we look at EV production plans going out into the future, most Canadian-made EVs aren’t really expected to come off assembly lines until 2027 [or] 2028, so we want to see that [iZEV] program extended to both

support our domestic market, but also to make sure that we’re helping Canadians make that switch and unlock the cost savings that EVs provide.” Clean Energy Canada is also interested in seeing the iZEV program be modified so as lower- and

Joanna Kyriazis, director of public affairs at Clean Energy Canada, says ‘most Canadian-made EVs aren’t really expected to come off assembly lines until 2027 [or] 2028.’ Photograph courtesy of Joanna Kyriazis

middle-income Canadians can more easily take advantage, such as by implementing lower price caps on the EV models that are eligible for rebates.

“We think if you set the price caps lower it will cause the carmakers to also drop their prices to come in under that minimum suggested retail price cap,” she said. “We also think the federal government could consider a design where more money is offered for vehicles that cost less. If a carmaker is going to introduce a budget-model for mainstream Canadians, they should get rewarded for that, and they should get more money.”

Since 2020, China has emerged as the world’s largest manufacturer and exporter of EVs with annual EV exports totalling \$47.2-billion in 2023, according to Finance Canada in an Aug. 26 press release.

The 100 per cent tariff, and other measures announced in August, are intended to “level the playing field” for Canada’s EV industry with Chinese producers “who benefit from unfair, non-market policies and practices,” according to the press release.

“Canadian workers and critical sectors, including steel and aluminum ... are facing an intentional, state-directed policy of overcapacity, undermining the Canada’s ability to compete in domestic and global markets. That is why our government is moving forward with decisive action to level the playing field, protect Canadian workers, and match measures taken by key trading

partners,” said Freeland in the press release.

David Adams, president and CEO of Global Automakers of Canada, told *The Hill Times* that he views the 100-per-cent tariff on EVs imported from China as “primarily defensive.” The tariff move may be due to concerns related to major Chinese EV firms seeking to enter the Canadian marketplace, including BYD, China’s biggest EV manufacturer, according to Adams.

“I think [the 100-per-cent tariff is] warranted in terms of trying to provide the Canadian—and really the North American industry—with time that it needs ... for the EV ecosystem to be developed,” said Adams. “It’s more the concern I think about the BYDs and the other Chinese companies that are coming into the marketplace with vehicles that are state-subsidized and really competing from an unfair competitive playing field, as far as the government’s concerned.”

BYD Canada registered to lobby the federal government on Aug. 12. The company intends to engage Ottawa in discussions about an “expected market entry of BYD into Canada for the sale of passenger electric vehicles, and the establishment

of a new business, and the application of tariffs on EVs,” according to its registry file.

The company is represented on the registry by consultants Andrew Sennyah, Cameron Doherty, and Christine McMillan of Crestview Strategy.

Elizabeth Kwan, a senior researcher with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), told *The Hill Times* that her organization supports the tariffs on Chinese-made EVs into Canada, calling it a stop-gap measure to allow time for this country’s domestic EV supply chain to get established.

In a submission to Finance on July 31, 2024, the CLC raised concern that “a surge of cheap made-in-China EVs is arriving in the North American market,” which is undermining Canada’s developing EV sector.

“If we have a lot of dumping of cheap EV cars here, then, basically, it affects the share that the North American EVs would have, and the ability to actually get North American EVs out there, made and marketed,” said Kwan.

“I think the conversation will continue. It has to continue. This is really an immediate step to ensure that the plans and the investment into ... the EV supply chain and the industry and the jobs involved in it are protected by ensuring that they actually can take root.”

In response to Canada’s EV tariffs, China’s Commerce Ministry announced on Sept. 3 that Canada “has taken discriminatory unilateral restrictive measures against imports from China,” and that they will take the case to the World Trade Organization.

The ministry also announced plans to start an anti-dumping investigation into canola imports from Canada. The Canadian Canola Growers Association (CCGA) issued a press release on Sept. 4 stating the group is “closely monitoring the situation and communicating with fellow stakeholders and government about the importance of stable market access for canola farmers.”

“Canadian farmers rely on rules-based international trade, and we feel strongly that Canada’s canola trade is in alignment with that,” said Rick White, CCGA’s president and CEO. “With China being our second-most important market for canola exports, it is critical that issues facing canola farmers are brought forward in discussions.”

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Joanna Kyriazis, director of public affairs at Clean Energy Canada, says ‘most Canadian-made EVs aren’t really expected to come off assembly lines until 2027 [or] 2028.’ Photograph courtesy of Joanna Kyriazis



David Adams, president and CEO of Global Automakers of Canada, says the new tariff on EVs imported from China is ‘warranted in terms of trying to provide the Canadian—and really the North American—industry with the time that it needs ... for the EV ecosystem to be developed.’ Photograph courtesy of David Adams

News

New return-to-office mandate for federal public servants kicks off as unions prepare telework campaign

As federal public servants return to the office three days a week, the battle over remote work will head to full court hearings.

Continued from page 1

to our great-grandparents,” wrote Sharon DeSousa, national president of PSAC, in an op-ed last week in *The Hill Times*.

The *Ottawa Citizen* reported the union plans to launch a \$1-million national campaign against the return-to-office mandate, which will see the money go towards court challenges, social media ads, and TV and radio spots.

According to the union, all this money is not about one extra day in the office, but about a so-called “flip flop” from the government over their remote work messaging to its staff.

Show me the data

Canada’s top civil servant is defending this new return-to-office model as a way to improve the federal public service.

Privy Council Clerk John Hannaford wrote a joint message to employees last week with Treasury Board of Canada Secretary Bill Matthews that “[working] together onsite strengthens collaboration within and across teams and increases opportunities for learning and sharing.”

But the unions aren’t buying that.

“Our data shows that federal public service workers have been just as productive, just as collaborative, just as efficient—and in a lot of cases, more efficient—in providing services to Canadians through remote work. And so we’ve never gotten a clear answer from the government as to why they’ve changed tact,” said Silas.

PSAC directed *The Hill Times* to Statistics Canada data that showed labour productivity from federal government services has steadily gone up from 2021, and has since outpaced productivity in all industries, including the business sector. The data also shows there was a slight dip in labour productivity in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, but that rates were still higher than 2019 levels.

Nathan Prier, president of the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, added the government “can’t point to any single productivity set, they can’t really point to anything that even



The Public Service Alliance of Canada has launched a court challenge to the partial-in-office mandate. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

provides evidence as to why this policy needs to be rolled out.”

The Privy Council Office declined *The Hill Times*’ request for an interview, but provided a statement saying their “motivation” was for the public service to be as “high performing” as it can be to better serve Canadians.

“It is not strictly about individual performance and productivity, it is about the public service as a whole. We strongly believe that an increased in-office presence will enhance the public service’s ability to continue providing Canadians with the services and support they expect and deserve,” said christiane fox, deputy clerk of the privy council, in a statement to *The Hill Times*.

Fox added that new or young public servants can benefit from more on-site observation and establishing stronger working relationships with colleagues.

However, Silas said public servants had already been providing services to Canadians remotely for years now, and that the issue for the public was more about accountability.

“At a very simple level, this is also about holding employers to account. Employers need to be accountable to their employees. And in this case, the federal government also need to be accountable to the public,” said Silas.

Polling shows many Canadians are in support of the new return-to-office requirement.

A Nanos Research poll from June found that 51 per cent of those surveyed “support” the three-day-a-week minimum for federal public servants to be in office. Another 24 per cent said

they had “somewhat support” for the requirement.

Location, location, location

Part of PSAC’s national campaign on telework will be to convince Canadians of the benefits of remote work.

The unions argue there are more benefits to Canadians for public servants working remotely—less commuting means it’s more environmentally friendly, more regional representation for workers outside downtown Ottawa, and better accessibility for Canadians with disabilities.

Remote work can also be a benefit to the Liberal government’s plans to boost Canada’s housing supply, the unions argue.

In April’s federal budget, the Liberal government announced it’s seeking to reduce Public Services and Procurement Canada’s (PSPC) office portfolio by 50 per cent over 10 years to help convert underused federal offices into homes.

“How are you going to do that if you’re forcing people back into the offices?” asked Silas.

The feds have since launched an interactive map of federal lands and buildings available for housing development, but the unions are arguing this effort to address Canada’s housing shortage has resulted in another real estate crisis: a desk shortage.

The government’s ‘GCworkplace’ office modernization plan saw the government reduce “traditional office space” to adopt more “collaborative workspaces

that support hybrid work models.” In short, fewer assigned desks, and more shared desks that workers need to reserve in advance.

“They show up, there’s no desk, and then they have to go back home and work from there. And that’s a huge waste of resources,” said Silas.

If workers manage to reserve a desk, they might end up spending their day in virtual meetings anyway.

Despite setting the Sept. 9 deadline for a three-days-per-week return to the office, the government has acknowledged that some of its buildings won’t be ready for the bump in on-site work.

“We also know that some departments will need additional time to ensure their workplaces are ready, such as buildings that are currently under renovation,” said Hannaford and Matthews’ Sept. 3 joint letter to employees.

As for other building considerations, as of December 2022, there were about 490 PSPC-owned or leased buildings with asbestos, and another 50 labelled ‘work in progress.’ All of these buildings have an asbestos management plan in place.

Striking a ‘deal’

During a PSAC strike in 2023, one of the priorities for the union was to enshrine remote work into its collective agreement with the feds.

The union didn’t manage to secure any remote work protections into the final deal, but both sides agreed to negotiate a “letter of agreement” outside the collective

deal that included some telework provisions.

One of those provisions included a requirement for managers to assess remote work requests on an individual basis instead of by group. But the letter of agreement did not include any specifics about a number of dates, or a percentage of hours required for a worker to be physically in the office.

According to the letter, the parties did agree that telework arrangements were “voluntary,” and that it “is not a right or an entitlement of the employee unless agreed upon in connection with the duty to accommodate.”

Also in the letter of agreement: telework arrangements “may be terminated by either party at any time with reasonable notice.”

One of the few concrete items to come out of the letter of agreement was the establishment of a joint consultation committee on the government’s Directive on Telework, the official remote work framework for civil servants in the core public administration.

But that has fallen to the wayside as PSAC and CAPE quit that joint committee this past summer.

“They just weren’t willing to have a real conversation on this at the same time that they forced a three-day-in-the office return,” said Prier.

Prier said that the Treasury Board Secretariat dismissed talks about the impact of their new three-day mandate to their consultations about the Directive on Telework.

“This employer decided that they were not going to have a serious conversation about it, talk about all the policies that impact that conversation. And so ourselves, and the other unions, are done with being fooled around with at this table,” said Prier.

See you in court

While the unions and the government won’t meet at the committee table, they will meet in court.

Just over a week ago, a Federal Court judge ordered a full hearing for PSAC’s challenge to the partial-in-office mandate.

In her decision, Justice Glenys McVeigh wrote, “I simply conclude that the parties must argue this matter based on a full record.”

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, a Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat spokesperson said that the judge’s ruling “does not affect the decision on increased in-person presence. Both parties will have an opportunity to present their arguments at a later date.”

McVeigh’s clarified that her decision did not mean she endorsed the union’s arguments.

Despite the lack of endorsement, the head of Canada’s largest federal public sector union has claimed triumph.

“The Federal Court’s decision to hear our case is an important win for federal workers fighting for a fair and transparent approach to telework,” said DeSousa in a statement.

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Trudeau left with ‘fewer options’ after NDP scraps agreement and campaign director quits, say MPs and political insiders

By ending his deal with the Liberals, Jagmeet Singh has removed the prime minister’s leverage in deciding the timing of the next election, says Darrell Bricker, CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs.

Continued from page 1

on a confidence motion. So, in order to survive on confidence votes in the House, the Liberals will have to cut deals with opposition parties to get their legislation through in the Commons on regular basis. On every confidence vote, the Liberals will have to secure the support of at least one of three opposition parties: Conservative, NDP, or Bloc Québécois.

According to Canada’s fixed date election law, the next election is scheduled for Oct. 20, 2025, but one could be triggered earlier if the Liberals lose a confidence vote.

Even though the Liberals won only a minority in the 2021 election, the Liberal-NDP deal meant Trudeau could run his government like a majority. Going forward, the focus in the House will shift more towards politics than policy, with opposition parties outnumbering the Liberals, and seizing every opportunity to challenge the government.

For months now, pundits had been predicting that the NDP would retract their support for the government given the need to distinguish itself from the Liberals in the next election to offer itself as an alternative. Because of this factor, the Liberals had been operating on the assumption that the next election will be triggered upon the tabling of the next budget in spring 2025. But now, it remains to be seen if the government can survive until then.

Since last year, the Conservatives under Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) have been leading in the polls by a double-digit margin. The high level of support for the Conservatives has been bolstered by voters who previously were Liberal- or NDP-leaning.

“At some point this was going to happen. It had to happen



National Liberal campaign director Jeremy Broadhurst, right, announced last week that he plans to step down. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

because there was no way the government was going to last until October [2025],” said Darrell Bricker, CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs.

“Quite frankly, [the NDP] probably should have done [this] at the time of the budget, and now looks like they’ve moved off policy, they moved on to politics.”

Bricker said that by decoupling from the Liberals, the NDP has stripped the government of a key advantage in electoral politics: controlling the timing of the next election. Now, Bricker said, Trudeau’s potential to survive until next October are slim, and he may need to either make a new offer to the NDP, or work with the Bloc Québécois.

“Jagmeet Singh has taken the momentum away from the Liberal Party, and the decision about the future of the government away from the Liberal Party,” said Bricker.

“It’s a very, very tough day for Justin Trudeau today because the window on everything is closing. His options are getting fewer and fewer... there’s fewer spaces on the chessboard for him. He could come up with some sort of a stronger coalition deal for the NDP—although I don’t know why they would want to do that—or just wait around to lose on some non-confidence motion on an opposition day.”

In interviews with *The Hill Times*, Liberal MPs offered mixed opinions on what lies ahead in the coming months of their current mandate. Some said that

their party can shift back to the centre without worrying about the NDP’s stance on policies.

“This unshackles us. It’s good,” said one Liberal MP. “It gives us a chance to differentiate ourselves.”

The MP said that the NDP move would push undecided Liberal MPs to make up their minds one way or the other on whether to seek re-election as they had entered “the anything-can-happen-anytime territory.”

Another MP predicted more focus on politics than policy in the coming months. Considering the current national public opinion poll numbers for the three federal parties, the MP said, the NDP could present themselves as a viable alternative to the Liberals if they gained two or three points.

A Nanos Research poll released last week suggested that the Conservatives had the support of 38 per cent of Canadians, the Liberals 25 per cent, the NDP 20 per cent, and the Greens four per cent.

“It’s going to be a game of cat and mouse,” a third MP said. “For the next several months it’s going to be a really interesting game that’s being played.”

Making matters more complicated for the Liberals is the resignation of Jeremy Broadhurst, the national campaign director for the Liberal Party, first reported by the *Toronto Star*. According to the story, Broadhurst told Trudeau their party cannot win the next election, suggesting a

new person who believes victory was possible should be appointed to succeed him.

“If Trudeau’s inner circle does not believe they can win, how do they expect us to think we can win?” a fourth MP told *The Hill Times*.

Meanwhile, NDP political strategist Jordan Lechnitz, former deputy chief of staff to then-NDP leader Tom Mulcair, said it was a good decision to make the announcement with enough time to create some distance between the governing Liberals before the return of Parliament.

“I would take Singh seriously when he says that one of the reasons he’s doing this is because the Liberals are ‘too weak,’” Lechnitz said. “[The Liberals] have fallen out of touch, and as a consequence they are dragging everyone around them down, including the NDP.”

“This is something that he needed to do, and prolonging it—when the Liberals made clear there wasn’t anything more to be gotten out of the deal—wouldn’t have made sense for the party.”

Lechnitz added that the governing Liberals’ decision to impose binding arbitration on striking rail workers ultimately sealed the deal’s fate.

“That was not in the spirit of the agreement, and Singh was clear that the NDP’s support couldn’t be taken for granted,” Lechnitz said.

While the timing and decision are right, “time will tell if they stick the landing,” Lechnitz said.

As for what the impact of the agreement’s end will be, Lechnitz said those aren’t limited to a no-confidence vote and the dissolution of Parliament.

“This will be a return to normalcy,” Lechnitz said, predicting a resumption of the usual “high stakes and low predictability” of past minority parliaments.

“I do think it is going to keep MPs in all parties a little bit more on their toes on this stuff,” Lechnitz said, adding that beyond providing votes, the agreement had provided a large amount of stability to both the House of Commons and committees.

“The Liberals have been able to govern as though they’ve had a majority, and that is now gone,” Lechnitz said. “They will now have to rededicate resources to managing Parliament and committees, and whipping votes, and anyone who’s lived through a minority government can tell you that it’s extremely draining.”

NDP strategist and former staffer Cam Holmstrom, founder of Niipaawi Strategies, agreed that the announcement’s rollout had been “pretty good,” but feels it could have been far more effective in the spring following the NSICOP report’s release.

Holmstrom said that if Singh had chosen that moment to pull his support for the government, the decision would have looked far more principled.

“You can talk to me all day long about the fighting for the middle class and against Conservative cuts; that’s all good stuff, but the decision is harder to square after you continued your support after saying the prime minister isn’t taking threats to our democracy seriously,” Holmstrom said. “To me, that’s going to make it a bit harder to stick this landing.”

Had Singh ended the agreement after reading the report, Holmstrom said the party could have spent the summer talking about how he took a stand to protect Canada’s democratic institutions and attacking Poilievre for refusing to even read it.

Instead, the NDP spent that time defending its continued support for the Liberals and taken even more criticism following the imposition of binding arbitration to end the railway strike.

“Protection of our democratic institutions is something that is sacrosanct, and I think that was a political miscalculation,” Holmstrom said. “Now anyone who wants to paint the party in a worse light will say the decision was made to protect union bosses, but not democracy.”

As for the announcement itself, Holmstrom also noted the rather “sombre” tone Singh affected, in contrast to the more positive tone he says is generally more effective for New Democrats.

“It’s a sombre decision, and I’m sure that’s how people are feeling, but I’m not sure that’s what works best for him,” Holmstrom said.

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Feature

The 2022-2024 Liberal-NDP supply-and-confidence agreement

The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade



Then-labour minister Seamus O'Regan, left, greets NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh before a press conference on Nov. 9, 2023, ahead of the tabling of anti-scab legislation Bill C-58, a key aspect of the agreement between the two parties



Health Minister Mark Holland introduces the Pharmacare Act at a press conference in Ottawa on Feb. 29, another key plank of the Liberal-NDP deal. The bill is now in the Senate, but the program has not yet been rolled out to Canadians.



NDP health critic Don Davies at a Liberal-NDP press conference at the Centretown Community health centre about the government's introduction of the Pharmacare Act on Feb. 29.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, right, meets with NDP leader Jagmeet Singh in his West Block office on Nov. 14, 2019. Less than three years later, the pair formed an agreement whereby the New Democrats would guarantee confidence and supply in the House in exchange for core policy priorities.



NDP House Leader Peter Julian was a key figure in the day-to-day practicalities of the party's deal with the Liberals.



Then-labour minister Seamus O'Regan speaks with reporters in the House of Commons foyer on Feb. 27 after the passage of anti-scab legislation Bill C-58 without opposition through second reading.



Stuart Benson
Party Central

Post-Summer Fête at the Met raises \$6,000 for Shepherds of Good Hope



Liberal MP Yasir Naqvi, left, Russell Williams, senior vice president of mission at Diabetes Canada; Shepherds of Good Hope's CEO David Gourlay, and Liberal MP Mona Fortier stopped by 3Sixty Public Affairs' 'post-summer fête' and fundraiser at the Métropolitain Brasserie on Sept. 4. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson

3Sixty Public Affairs hosted its annual post-summer fundraiser at the Métropolitain Brasserie on Sept. 4.

Ahead of the semi-official start to the fall parliamentary social calendar next week, 3Sixty Public Affairs hosted its annual "post-summer fête" and fundraiser at the Métropolitain Brasserie on Sept. 4.

Capping off the opening day of the Canada Drug Agency's yearly symposium, the annual fundraiser offered the attending pharmaceutical and healthcare technology representatives a chance to unwind and socialize after a long day of panels and plenaries.

Attendees were also encouraged to donate to Ottawa's Shepherds of Good Hope Foundation (SGH). IQVIA Canada and 3Sixty made an initial combined donation of \$5,000—presented to SGH CEO David Gourlay via a giant novelty cheque—to get the donations rolling, and the event raised an additional \$1,000 by the night's end due partly to some light peer pressure.

Sometimes, bullying is effective and even beneficial to society.

Compounding the social pressure, Gourlay also spoke about the importance of SGH's programs, including its transitional emergency shelter, supportive housing services, and community kitchen.

While no longer called a soup kitchen, Gourlay explained that the program's origins lie in "the secret of peanut butter sandwiches" and a hungry kid on the steps of St. Brigid's Church—followed by two more kids the next day, and 10 the next.

Since then, the program has grown to serve roughly 700,000 meals annually.

If tugging on their heartstrings didn't work, Gourlay was also prepared to appeal to attendees' sense of civic-fiduciary responsibility, noting that the emergency shelter saves the City of Ottawa up to \$1-million per year in policing, healthcare, and administrative costs.

Among the philanthropic partygoers opening their wallets to donate their money saved at the open bar, **Party Central** spotted Dr. **Bettina Hamelin**, president of Innovative Medicines Canada (IMC), and her predecessor **Russell Williams**, now the SVP Mission at Diabetes Canada, IQVIA's **Mark Omato**, ALS Canada CEO **Tammy Moore**, and Health Charities Coalition Canada's CEO **Connie Cote**.

While most of the usual politicians, politicians and parliamentary socialites have yet to make their pilgrimage back to the Hill, local Liberal MPs **Mona Fortier** and **Yasir Naqvi** were on hand to mingle and deliver a few words and their best Abbott-and-Costello routine. Thankfully, they were not asked to do any magic tricks instead of the usual illusionist 3Sixty hires for the reception.

Local musician **Matt Powell** provided the actual entertainment this year, and while he was unwilling to take requests—meaning no *Sweet Caroline*—he did perform a slowed-down lounge cover of *Crocodile Rock*.

Once the speeches were done and the giant cheque delivered, most guests began filtering out around 10 p.m., presumably to wake up bright and early for another full symposium day. **Party Central** followed suit shortly after, passing by the PMO's **Katie Telford** and **Brian Clow**, having some presumably very relaxed, low-stress, after-work drinks.

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Local Ottawa musician Matt Powell provided the live music to cap off the night.



ALS Canada CEO Tammy Moore, left, Health Charities Coalition CEO Connie Cote, and 3Sixty's Jerry Jeffcott.



Prospectus Associates' Bruce Hartley, left, Innovative Medicine's Hugh Scott, and SGH's David Gourlay.



Dempster, left, Naqvi, and Fortier.



Hugh Scott, left, IMC Health Research Foundation Executive Director; Liberal MP Mona Fortier, Genome Canada's Sapna Mahajan, and IMC President Dr. Bettina Hamelin.



Janssen's Kobina Quansah, left, Lyfegen's Simon Farrow and Giri Marib, and Roche's Simon Yunger



Shepherds of Good Hope's CEO David Gourlay, left, Amber Brannan, SGH manager, Brad Milson, IQVIA Canada general manager, and Berrrie Forestell, SGH senior manager



Dempster, left, and 3Sixty CEO Johanne Chambers.

The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson



Liberal MP Mona Fortier, left, Shepherds of Good Hope CEO David Gourlay, Amber Brannan, SGH manager, 3Sixty President William Dempster, Liberal MP Yasir Naqvi, IQVIA's Mark Omato, 3Sixty's CEO Johanne Chambers, and IQVIA's Brad Milson.



Laura Ryckewaert Hill Climbers

Fresh press secretary among recent staff changes for Immigration Minister Miller

Plus, International Development Minister Ahmed Hussen has a new special assistant.

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Minister **Marc Miller** has found a new press secretary for his office in **Renée LeBlanc Proctor**, who until recently had been a senior communications adviser to Sport and Physical Activity Minister **Carla Qualtrough**.



Renée LeBlanc Proctor is now press secretary to Minister Miller. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

As recently reported by **Hill Climbers**, LeBlanc Proctor's last day with Qualtrough's office was on Aug. 16. She's since started in Miller's shop where she fills shoes left vacant since **Bahoz Dara Aziz** left to become director of communications to Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister **Gary Anandasangaree** in June.

LeBlanc Proctor had been working for Qualtrough—and on the Hill in general—since December of last year, and is a former associate copy editor with Narcity Media in Toronto.

She holds a master's degree in communication and media studies through a joint program at both Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) and York University, and while in the midst of her graduate studies, she gained experience as a writing consultant, as well as working as a teaching assistant. LeBlanc Proctor has also briefly worked as a research co-ordinator with TMU's Modern Literature and Culture Research Centre. In addition to her master's degree, she holds a bachelor's degree in English language and literature from St. Francis Xavier University.

In Miller's office, LeBlanc Proctor is now working under director of communications **Aïssa Diop**.

One person whom LeBlanc Proctor won't be working alongside is issues manager and communications adviser **Aiman Akmal**, who has bade farewell to the Hill and is set to begin graduate studies at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom this fall. An ex-parliamentary guide on the Hill over the summer of 2019, Akmal landed her first job working for a politician soon after completing her undergraduate studies at the University of Toronto in 2021,



Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Minister Marc Miller speaks with reporters on Feb. 29. Miller recently added a new press secretary to his team. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



Aiman Akmal is headed for Cambridge University. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

becoming a constituency assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Yvan Baker**.

She went on to tackle communications work in the Liberal research bureau (LRB) through most of 2022 before being hired to work for Miller as then-Crown-Indigenous relations minister in November. Originally hired as an issues manager, Akmal added communications adviser to her title after she followed Miller to the immigration, refugees, and citizenship portfolio in the wake of the July 2023 cabinet shuffle.

With Akmal's departure, **Olivia Wright**, who until recently had been busy as executive assistant to both Miller and his chief of staff, **Mike Burton**, has been promoted to digital and communications adviser.



Olivia Wright is now a digital and communications adviser to Minister Miller. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Wright has been with Miller's office for the past year, having been hired as executive assistant not long after last summer's shuffle. Before then, she'd been a summer communications intern at Liberal Party headquarters in Ottawa. Wright previously did three consecutive summer internships working for Toronto City Councillor **Jennifer McKelvie**—who represents Scarborough's Ward 25—in 2019, 2020, and 2021. Wright has also interned with the senior associate business analytics and reporting team with the BMO Financial Group's Indigenous banking unit.

Akmal isn't the only recent staff to exit from Miller's office. Parliamentary affairs and legislative assistant **Sophie Beach-Vaive** has also bade the immigration minister's team farewell, though **Hill Climbers** understands she hasn't gone far—stay



Sophie Beach-Vaive has bade farewell to Minister Miller's team. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

tuned for an update.

Like Wright, Beach-Vaive joined Miller's office in September 2023. Prior to the shuffle, she'd been working for then-Treasury Board president **Mona Fortier** since September 2022. Beginning as executive assistant to Fortier's chief of staff, Beach-Vaive was given the added title of operations assistant the next year, a few months before Fortier was shuffled out of cabinet. Beach-Vaive is also a former assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Marie-France Lalonde**.

Following her exit, **Satchel Louis** has been hired as a new parliamentary affairs adviser and assistant to Miller's parliamentary secretary, Liberal MP **Paul Chiang**.

Louis is already well familiar with Chiang, for whom he's been working as the Liberal MP for Markham-Unionville, Ont., since the 2021 election.



Satchel Louis has joined the immigration minister's office. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Louis, who has a bachelor's degree in political science and government from the University of Guelph, spent the summer of 2021 as an intern in the LRB. During the subsequent federal election, he worked on his dad, Liberal MP **Tim Louis**' successful re-election campaign in Kitchener-Conestoga, Ont., before being hired by Chiang.

Along with Burton and Diop, other senior staff in Miller's office currently include: deputy chief of staff **Youmy Han**, director of operations **Bryan Rourke**, director of policy and legal affairs **Julia Carbone**, director of case management **Lisa Cheskes**, and director of parliamentary affairs **Sarah Dunn**.

Skipping across the cabinet table, International Development Minister **Ahmed Hussen** has some fresh energy in his office with the recent addition of special assistant for communications **Zhenai Xiao** earlier this summer.



Zhenai Xiao is now a special assistant for communications to Minister Hussen. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Xiao officially joined Hussen's team on July 15. She's a former communications and advocacy consultant with Programme CLÉ in Cameroon, which, as described on its website, stands for compétences, leadership, and education, and aims to improve the economic and social well-being of vulnerable people, in particular women and girls, through education.

Xiao has also been a communications adviser with Young Diplomats of Canada since October 2023, and while wrapping up her master's degree in public communication at Université Laval, she did a public diplomacy internship with the U.S. Consulate General in Montreal, Que., amongst other past experience.

Shanti Cosentino is director of communications to Hussen, and currently also oversees press secretary and communications assistant **Olivia Batten**.

Mike Maka is chief of staff to the international development minister, supported by deputy chief of staff and director of outreach **Hursh Jaswal**.

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The Hill Times

Conservative MP Michael Barrett to speak at Sept. 10 breakfast



Conservative MP Michael Barrett, his party's ethics critic, will speak at a breakfast hosted by Grenville Futures, the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce, and the South Grenville Chamber of Commerce on Sept. 10. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10

Breakfast with Conservative MP Barrett—Grenville Futures, the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce and the South Grenville Chamber of Commerce host a breakfast with Conservative MP Michael Barrett and Ontario Progressive Conservative MPP Steve Clark. Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 7:30 a.m. ET at the Prescott Golf Club, 900 Boundary St., Prescott, Ont. Details via Eventbrite.

Bank of Canada Governor to Deliver Remarks—Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem will deliver remarks to the Canada-United Kingdom Chamber of Commerce. Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 8:25 a.m. ET, in London, U.K. Details online: bankofcanada.ca.

RBC President McKay to Deliver Remarks—Dave McKay, president and CEO of the Royal Bank of Canada, will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, 100 Front St. W., Toronto.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10—WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 11

Canada Fintech Forum—Finance Montréal hosts the 11th edition of the Canada Fintech Forum, the largest fintech event in Canada. Quebec's Finance Minister Eric Girard is among the speakers. The latest edition of the *Quebec Fintech Report* will also be unveiled. Tuesday, Sept. 10, to Wednesday, Sept. 11 at the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, Montreal. Details online: forumfintechcanada.com.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10—TUESDAY, SEPT. 24

UN General Assembly—The 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly opens today in New York City with a high-level General Debate. Tuesday, Sept. 10, to Tuesday, Sept. 24.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 11

Discussion: 'Advocacy Essentials'—The OTUS Association Exchange hosts a networking event and panel discussion titled, "Advocacy Essentials: Influence and Impact," featuring Emily Holtby, senior director at the Canadian Media Producers Association, and Government Relations Institute of Canada board member; Stephen Heckbert, executive director, Canadian Pork Council; and Alana Baker, formerly with the Canadian Medical Association, and the GRIC. Wednesday, Sept. 11, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Ottawa Marriott Hotel, 100 Kent St. Details via Eventbrite.

Seminar on the Canada-Taiwan Partnership—Conservative MP Michael Chong will take part in a seminar, "Pathways to Prosperity: Redefining the Canada-Taiwan Economic Partnership," hosted by the Toronto Region Board of Trade, and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office. Wednesday, Sept. 11, at 1:30 p.m. at The Quay, 100 Queens Quay East, 3rd Floor, Toronto. Details: bot.com.

Bob Rae to Discuss the UN—Bob Rae, Canada's ambassador to the United Nations in New York City, will take part in a debate and public talk on "The United Nations and its Future" hosted by the Canadian International Council. Wednesday, Sept. 11, 6:30 p.m. AT at the Halifax Central Library, 5440 Spring Garden Rd., Halifax. Details: thecic.org.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 12

Privy Council Clerk Hannaford to Deliver Remarks—John Hannaford, clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the cabinet, will deliver remarks at a roundtable lunch hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, Sept. 12, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details online: cdhowe.org.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 13

Senator Gignac to Deliver Remarks—PSG Senator Clément Gignac will take part in a breakfast "Discussion on the Economic Outlook for 2024-2025" in French hosted by the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal. Friday, Sept. 13, at 8 a.m. ET at Le Centre Sheraton, 1201 René-Lévesque Blvd. W., Montreal. Details: cmmm.ca.

MONDAY, SEPT. 16

House Resumes Sitting—The House will resume sitting on Monday, Sept. 16, and will sit for four weeks from Sept. 16-Oct. 11, but will take Monday, Sept. 30, off. It breaks Oct. 14-18, and resumes sitting on Oct. 21. It sits Oct. 21-Nov. 9, and breaks on Nov. 11 for Remembrance Day week until Nov. 15. It resumes again on Nov. 18, and is scheduled to sit from Nov. 18 to Dec. 17.

Two Federal Byelections—Federal byelections will be held on Monday, Sept. 16, in the electoral districts of Elmer—Transcona, Man., and LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Que., to fill vacancies in the House of Commons.

Ambassador May to Deliver Remarks—Canada's ambassador to China, Jennifer May, will deliver bilingual remarks at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Monday, Sept. 16, at 11:30 a.m. at the DoubleTree by Hilton Montréal, 1255

Jeanne-Mance St., Montreal. Details: corim.qc.ca.

Webinar: 'Geopolitics of Trade in an Era of Security'—The Institute for Research in Public Policy hosts a webinar on "The Geopolitics of Trade in an Era of Security," expanding on the ideas raised in the corresponding *Policy Options* editorial series about how major international players including Canada are navigating this rapidly evolving geopolitical environment. Monday, Sept. 16, at 12 p.m. ET happening online. Details: irpp.org.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 17

Canada's Housing Affordability Crisis—The Economic Club of Canada hosts "Tackling Canada's Housing Affordability Crisis," a panel discussion featuring leading experts who will examine the ongoing Canadian housing market crisis, and the key factors influencing it. Thursday, Sept. 17, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Hilton Toronto. Details: economicclub.ca.

Mining Association President to Deliver Remarks—Pierre Gratton, president and CEO of the Mining Association of Canada, will deliver his annual address to the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. Tuesday, Sept. 17, at 11:30 a.m. PT at the Fairmont Pacific Rim, 1038 Canada Pl., Vancouver. Details online: boardoftrade.com.

Fall Sitting Housewarming—Earncliffe, *iPolitics*, and Metropolitan Brasserie host the 2024 Fall Sitting Housewarming. Celebrate the start of the fall sitting of the 44th Parliament. Catch up with friends and colleagues over bubbly and snacks. Tuesday, Sept. 17, at 5 p.m. at Metropolitan Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr. Details via Eventbrite.

Beer Canada Reception—Beer Canada invites parliamentarians and staff to a reception in advance of Canadian Beer Day. Tuesday, Sept. 17, 6 p.m. ET, in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building. RSVP by Sept. 6 to cheers@beercanada.com.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 17—THURSDAY, SEPT. 19

Special Chiefs Assembly on FNCFs Program Reform—The Assembly of First Nations hosts a Special Chiefs Assembly on Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program. Chiefs and proxies will deliberate and vote on the proposed reforms. Tuesday, Sept. 17, to Thursday, Sept. 19, at the RBC Convention Centre, Winnipeg, Man. Details: afn.ca.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 18

Conference on Afghanistan—The University of Ottawa and the Em-

bassy of Afghanistan host a day-long "Conference on Afghanistan: Changing the Approach and Reversing the Trajectory," exploring the current multifaceted crisis in Afghanistan with a focus on the ongoing global efforts to adopt and implement a new integrated approach. Wednesday, Sept. 18, at 9 a.m. at FSS 4007, 120 University Priv. Details: cips-cepi.ca.

'How Canada Can Matter More to the U.S.'—The Empire Club of Canada hosts a discussion titled, "Borderline: How Canada Can Matter More to the United States—and the Rest of the World" featuring Public Policy Forum president Edward Greenspon, and Janice Stein, founding director of the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. Wednesday, Sept. 18, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, 100 Front St. W. Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

Panel: 'Three Years Since the Taliban Takeover'—The NATO Association of Canada and the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History host "Three Years Since the Taliban Takeover: Security Threats, Humanitarian Crisis, and the Fight for Freedom" featuring panellists who will take part in two sessions. Wednesday, Sept. 18, at 2 p.m. ET at the Munk School, University of Toronto. Details: billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca.

Beverley McLachlin to Discuss Her New Book—Former chief justice Beverley McLachlin will discuss her latest work of fiction, *Proof*, a thriller featuring defence attorney Jilly Truitt as she defends a high-profile mother accused of kidnapping her own child, hosted by the Ottawa International Writers' Festival. Wednesday, Sept. 18 at 8 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: writersfestival.org.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 21

Canada Strong and Free Regional Networking Conference—Conservative MP John Barlow is among the speakers at the Canada Strong and Free Regional Networking Conference. This year's theme is "Alberta Leading the Way." Saturday, Sept. 21, at the Red Deer Resort and Casino, 3310 50 Ave., Red Deer, Alta. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

MONDAY, SEPT. 23

Space Canada's Annual Parliamentary Reception—Brian Gallant hosts Space Canada's third Annual Parliamentary Reception featuring networking with leaders of Canada's emerging space ecosystem, food and drinks, several space-related interactive displays, and a special guest speaker. Monday, Sept. 23, 5-7 p.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building. Details and RSVP to: RSVP@space-canada.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 24

Panel: 'Canada as Natural Resource Powerhouse'—The Ottawa Board of Trade hosts a panel discussion on "Charting the Path: Canada's Potential as a Natural Resource Powerhouse and the Impact to Canadians" featuring speakers from the Indigenous Resource Network, Cenovus Energy, and Fertilizer Canada. Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 11 a.m. at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: business.ottawabot.ca.

Next Frontier in Canada's Digital Divide—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a hybrid event, "The Next Frontier in Canada's Digital Divide." Participants include Ian Scott, former CRTC chair; Bill Murdoch, executive director of Clear Sky Connections; and Elisha Ram, senior assistant deputy minister at Employment and Social Development Canada's Income Security and Social Development

Branch. Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 12 p.m. ET. Impact Hub Ottawa, 123 Slater St., 7th floor, and online. Details: irpp.org.

The Regent Debate—The C.D. Howe Institute hosts the sixth Regent Debate on the topic "Be It Resolved: Canada can turn a Trump Presidency from a threat into an opportunity." Arguing in favour are author and businessman Conrad Black, and former New Jersey governor Chris Christie. Arguing against the motion are former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, and the University of Calgary's Martha Hall Findlay. Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 5:15 p.m. at the Fairmont Royal York, Toronto. Details: cdhoweregntdebate.org.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 25

CUTA 2024 Policy Forum—The Canadian Urban Transit Association hosts its 2024 Policy Forum in Ottawa. Some of North America's leading transit and urban mobility experts will discuss the industry's future and the role of federal public transit policy. This year's event will focus on affordability, regional co-ordination and integration, and transit's role in addressing Canada's productivity gap. Wednesday, Sept. 25, at the Hilton Garden Inn Ottawa Downtown, 361 Queen St. Details via Eventbrite.

Via Rail Préséto to Deliver Remarks—Mario Pélétin, president and CEO of Via Rail, will deliver remarks titled "At the Heart of Canada's Passenger Journey: Via Rail's 2030 Vision" hosted by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. Wednesday, Sept. 25, at 7:30 a.m. PT at the Vancouver Club, 915 W. Hastings St., Vancouver. Details online: boardoftrade.com.

Minister Champagne to Deliver Remarks—Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne will take part in a bilingual discussion with Margrethe Vestager, executive vice-president of the European Commission for a Europe fit for the Digital Age and Commissioner for Competition, hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Wednesday, Sept. 25, at 11:30 a.m. ET. Location to be announced. Details: corim.qc.ca.

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