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THE HILL TIMES

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NEWS

Trudeau advises Liberal caucus to be 'very careful' commenting on Trump's election as president

BY ABBAS RANA

At the first closed-door national caucus meeting following the U.S. presidential election, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urged his 152 MPs to exercise caution when speaking about Donald Trump's election as the president-elect is known to take offence at minor comments, which could strain the bilateral relationship between the two nations.

The prime minister "just said, 'be very careful, people should be responsible,'" a Liberal MP told *The Hill Times* on a not-for-attribution basis because of the sensitivity of the subject, and since the conversation took place at the confidential caucus meeting. "We don't want to damage the future prospects. At the end of the day, we have to work with them no matter who leads."

Last Wednesday's national meeting was the first one after the Nov. 5 U.S. presidential election which elected Trump as president. The Republican candidate was first elected to the White House in 2016, but lost the 2020 election to Democrat Joe Biden.

Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) and Trump are not known to have a very cordial relationship, and the president-elect in the past has publicly called Trudeau "two-faced," and a "far-left lunatic." Trump has also repeated the false claim that the late-Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro could be Trudeau's father.

After the June 2018 G7 summit in Charlevoix, Que., Trump engaged in personal attacks on Twitter, now called X, against Trudeau, describing him as "weak" and "very dishonest." Trump did this in

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NEWS

'A lot of work that has to be done': how the government has been preparing for Trump 2.0

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

The Trudeau government has sought to reassure Canadians that it has been preparing for Donald Trump's return to the U.S. presidency in what former senior public servants say will have been a mammoth effort across the bureaucracy, diplomatic network, and broader civil society on both sides of the border.

"No one should assume that we've been sitting on our hands this whole time and are now wringing them," said Independent Senator Peter Boehm (Ontario), who was Canada's G7 sherpa for the 2018 summit during Trump's first term. "I am sure that within the bureaucracy, within the public service at the senior levels, there's been a great deal of preparation done, and I would not discount in any way the job that [Canadian Ambassador] Kirsten Hillman and her team has done in Washington."

The message from Canada's cabinet ministers following Trump's decisive win against incumbent U.S. Vice-President Kamala Harris on Nov. 5 focused on the long-term relationship between the two countries, and on the preparations Ottawa has made for a Republican victory.

"We've already started conversations, and we'll continue these conversations in the coming days and weeks," said Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.) during a press scrum on Nov. 6.

"I must say that my job is always to find common ground with the U.S. and also defend our interests, and that's what I'll do."

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Pictured top left and clockwise: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, U.S. president-elect Donald Trump, Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly, Trade Minister Mary Ng, PCO Clerk John Hannaford, PMO chief of staff Katie Telford, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, Foreign Affairs DM David Morrison, Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne, and Canada's Ambassador to U.S. Kirsten Hillman. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia

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Christina Leadlay

Heard On The Hill

Who's the one Grit both Conservatives fear and Liberals cheer as a future successor to Trudeau?



Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne, left, Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc, and former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney are some names that came up recently in a *Good Talk* podcast episode of people whom the Tories would fear but Liberals would cheer as their next party leader. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia

This was the question that *The Economist's* Rob Russo put to political commentator Chantal Hébert and Peter Mansbridge on the former CBC chief correspondent's *Good Talk* podcast on Nov. 1.

"When I ask Conservatives who they wouldn't like to see in the [Liberal] leadership, a couple of names come to the fore," said Russo on Mansbridge's show.

"And when I ask Liberals if they could do a bloodless switcheroo, one name appears more often than others these days. And there is a crossover with one of those names between who Conservatives would fear and whom MPs would like to see in the bloodless switcheroo.

"Any guesses as to who that person might be?" he asked.

Hébert shook her head saying "not Sean Fraser" a reference to the trio's talk earlier in the show about potential Liberal leadership material (Mansbridge had said he's impressed by Fraser's performance in the House against Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, while Hébert was adamant that Fraser's poor French skills and baggage from his time as immigration minister will never win over Quebecers.)

Meanwhile, Mansbridge coolly said "Dominic LeBlanc."

"Dominic LeBlanc" confirmed Russo.

"Both Conservatives wouldn't like to see him at the top of the Liberal ticket, and a knot of Liberal MPs seem to say he's the guy who could probably quickly bring us together, and win or hang on to the *château fort*—to the base in Quebec—and could win in Atlantic Canada, as well."

"That's LeBlanc" confirmed Mansbridge. "That's right," said

Russo, noting that François-Philippe Champagne's name has also come up as someone who knows business, is a hard worker, and can connect with people.

"There are many Conservatives who also fear Mark Carney," noted Hébert referring to the former Bank of Canada governor who has long been rumoured to be either a future Liberal candidate for MP, or more recently as the party's next leader.

Senators praise 'Lady' Jane Cordy as she retires early

Progressive Senator Jane Cordy is leaving the Red Chamber on Nov. 18, eight months ahead of her scheduled retirement date.

She was appointed to the Senate in 2000 by Jean Chrétien, and is currently the dean of the Senate.

PSG Senator Pierre J. Daulton led the tributes in the Red



PSG Senator Jane Cordy's last day will be Nov. 18. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Chamber on Nov. 5, calling Cordy a hard worker who's "taught us the significance of kindness," and "the value of listening with an open mind."

In a nod to Cordy's teaching career, CSG Senator Scott Tanas gave his colleagues a pop quiz on "parliamentary math," asking under how many Parliaments Cordy has been a Senator (Answer: nine), which committees has she not been a member (none, she's been on them all), and how many kilometres she's flown to attend the Senate during her 24-year career ("If you answered 1,378,080 or too far for too long, both answers are correct," said Tanas)

Fellow Nova Scotian and PSG Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard highlighted Cordy's advocacy for sickle-cell anemia awareness, and praised "Lady Jane"—as Cordy is affectionately known—as someone who "sees humanity in everyone everywhere."

And Conservative Senator Donald Plett conceded that while he and Cordy have "rarely seen eye to eye in this Chamber," he counted her amongst his friends: "we never considered partisanship a bad thing."

In her own remarks of thanks, Cordy picked up on Plett's comment: "Please stick with your political beliefs, but remember that we can still be friends at the end of the day," she said. "Sometimes we become so intense about what our beliefs are that we forget that it is just a political belief. What makes Canada best is when we come together and we compromise and do what is best for our country."

Cordy's family was in the Senate gallery on Nov. 5 for her farewell.

Cartoonist de Adder is 'doing okay'



De Adder is in the house: Michael de Adder, left, and Ian Hanomansing on Nov. 3. Screen shot courtesy CBC News

Award-winning editorial cartoonist Michael de Adder, who draws for *The Globe and Mail* and *The Hill Times*, sat down with the CBC's Ian Hanomansing on *The National* on Nov. 3. In addition to sketching Hanomansing, de Adder spoke with him about the state of editorial cartooning today.

"I have never been viewed more on a daily basis, yet my sources of income are drying up," said de Adder referring to his reach on social media, which he said is great for having control and expanding viewership, but is terrible as a source of income. "If Twitter paid we would be in a golden age of cartooning," he said.

With this wider reach comes instant feedback: "Now, if I do a

cartoon against [Pierre] Poilievre, I hear nothing but complaints that I never do [Justin] Trudeau. But then when I do Trudeau, I hear nothing but complaints that I never do Poilievre," he said, musing that while both Conservatives and Liberals might share a Poilievre cartoon of his for different purposes, "they don't see each other's posts for some reason, or they only see the complaints."

Touching on the Halifax *Chronicle-Herald's* recent parting of ways with de Adder, the Nova Scotia-based artist said he's "doing okay, all things considered" and has been painting of late—his first love. "I have some exciting things coming up."

CP says goodbye to Osman, hello to Duggan

It's one out, one in over at The Canadian Press' Ottawa bureau.

After nearly five years with the wire service, Laura Osman is joining *The Logic* on Nov. 18 as a reporter covering innovation and industrial policy, according to a Nov. 5 press release from managing editor Jordan Timm.

Meanwhile, Kyle Duggan announced last week he is moving to CP after 18 months with Politico. "I must be crazy to leave such a smart and amazing team that was so much fun to work with," he posted on X on Nov. 6. "Excited to say I'm joining the Canadian Press as a reporter! It's been a career dream of mine to work for the wire."



Laura Osman, left, and Kyle Duggan. Photograph courtesy of Twitter, and *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson

Ex-PM Harper to Receive Award on Nov. 12

Former prime minister Stephen Harper will receive the Defender of Israel Award at an event hosted by the Abraham Global Peace Initiative on Nov. 12 in North York, Ont. The award was first announced back in May.

"Few people would dispute the fact that The Rt. Hon. Stephen

Harper, Canada's 22nd Prime Minister, continues to be Israel's greatest friend and ally," according to the APGI website. "As Antisemitism and defamation of Israel surges, we must especially recognize non-Jewish voices who refuse to be silent and who are standing up and being counted."

Condolences for Bud Lang, Andrew Haydon

Two Canadian senior statesmen have died: Andrew Haydon and Gerald 'Bud' Lang.

Haydon was a legend in Ottawa municipal politics. He was Nepean's first mayor and subsequently chair of the Ottawa-Carleton region. "His 25 years of dedicated service to the people in the greater region has garnered him many awards including the naming of Andrew Haydon Park and Ottawa City Council chambers," reads his obituary. He died at home on Oct. 28, aged 91.

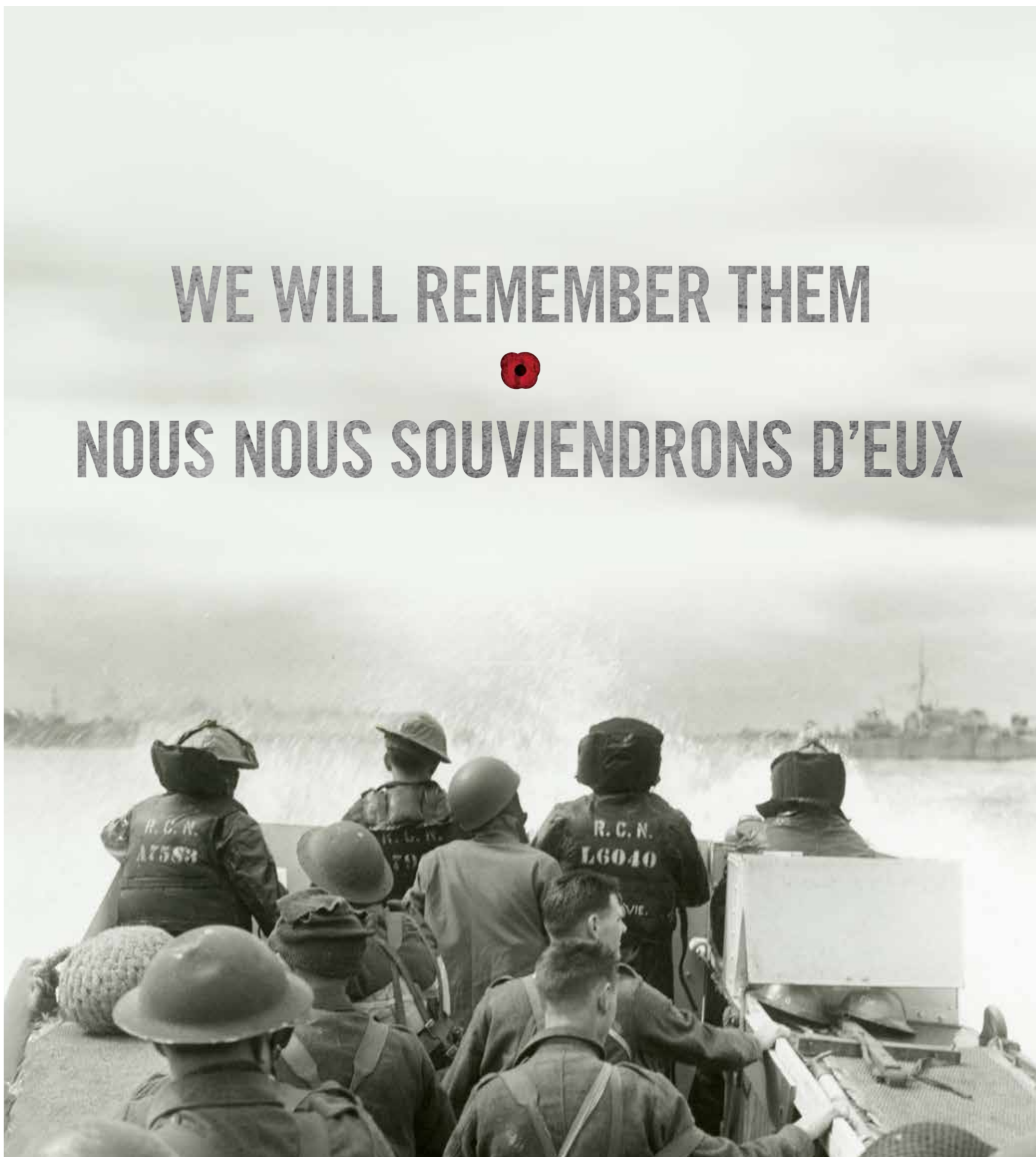
From Newfoundland and Labrador, Lang was a lawyer who was appointed by Jean Chrétien to the province's Supreme Court. "Bud Lang was a solid human being. He was ethical and principled. Despite the atrocities he saw as a judge, he was a man of immense religious faith," reads his obituary. Lang was 92 years old, and he was Raylene Lang's father.

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News

Lawsuit alleging anti-Black racism in public service at court for class-action certification hearings

The multibillion-dollar lawsuit alleges systemic anti-Black discrimination in the federal public service resulted in lost wages and pensions for Black government staff.

BY SOPHALL DUCH

Flashback to 1972: Pierre Elliott Trudeau was prime minister, Queen Elizabeth II was monarch, *The Godfather* was the highest-grossing movie, and Don McLean's *American Pie* was the top song in Canada.

It was also the year Michael Turner, a young Black man, would embark on his career in Canada's federal public service.

Two years later, Turner would get promoted to office auditor while working at the Department of National Revenue. Little did Turner know at the time that this would be his first, last, and only official promotion within the public service.

"I did not get a promotion in 50 years," said Turner to *The Hill Times*. "I've never ever heard of somebody going 50 years without a promotion."

Turner did have other roles, but was never promoted. He retired from the federal public service in April 2024 at the age of 76.

In his time as a public servant, Turner had seen nine prime ministers come and go. He had seen his workplace eventually become the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). And he also saw the introduction of computers and the internet to the public service.

Cases like Turner's are at the heart of a current lawsuit against the Government of Canada alleging systemic anti-Black racism within the federal public service.

The Black Class Action Secretariat (BCAS), the organization co-ordinating the lawsuit, is seeking \$2.5-billion in damages from the federal government over the alleged systematic failure to hire and promote its Black employees.

"We're fighting for Canada, not against Canada," Nicholas Marcus Thompson, BCAS CEO and lead plaintiff, told *The Hill Times*. "This case is really about redressing decades of anti-Black discrimination that our institutions have inflicted on workers."

Thompson clarified that removing the barriers Black workers' face will help everyone.



Black Class Action Secretariat's Nicholas Marcus Thompson, centre, and Bernadeth Betchi, left, are suing the federal government for alleged systemic anti-Black discrimination within the public service. Pictured right is Canadian Association of Professional Employees' Nathan Prier. *The Hill Times* photograph by Mike Lapointe

"We know other groups face these barriers as well, albeit at different levels. This is a fight for justice across Canada for all workers," said Thompson.

Thompson said that multiple government departments would use the same tools to appoint and promote non-Black workers, as well as use the same "best fit" practices to deem workers not qualified, as ways to discriminate against Black public servants.

Practices that resonated with former public servant Bernadeth Betchi.

"At the beginning of my career, I have noticed the differential treatment between myself and other non-Black folks, and the trajectory of their journey in getting higher positions, being given opportunities to act in positions. And often I would be given excuses," said Betchi, who is also one of the plaintiffs in the BCAS lawsuit, to *The Hill Times*.

Betchi, who is English-French bilingual, said she has missed out to unilingual non-Black colleagues on promotions for roles that required bilingualism. And that she's been told she doesn't have "enough senior management experience" despite past experience mentoring new workers on the job.

"I applied to basically anything that I could apply for. And even then, I wasn't able to get anything. So that's why I ended up just leaving," said Betchi.

Certification hearings

The hearings to certify whether the case could proceed as a class-action lawsuit is now in its final days at a federal court in Toronto.

The certification hearings, which began on Oct. 28, are set to wrap up on Nov. 13.

Last week, BCAS put forward an emergency motion to include new evidence—a report that found 62 per cent of Black executives reported direct workplace harassment or threat of reputational harms from senior leaders.

The report commissioned by the Black Executive Network interviewed 73 former and current Black executives in the federal public service.

As for the defendants, the lawyers representing the Government of Canada are looking to strike down the case to certify the lawsuit.

The Crown has argued that the courts lack jurisdiction over the claim, and that Black public servants can already seek "recourse" through their unions or under the Federal Public Service Labour Relations Act (FPSLRA).

"Federal public service employees, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and members of the Canadian Armed Forces all have access to comprehensive recourse regimes for dealing with employment-related disputes, including disputes regarding alleged workplace discrimination," said court documents submitted by Crown lawyers on July 29. "The remedies available through these recourse mechanisms are extensive and include both individual and systemic remedies, including monetary remedies and other forms of compensation."

A Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat spokesperson expanded on the issue of court jurisdiction: "The grievance process cannot be circumvented by separate action because Sec. 236 of [FPSLRA] prevents courts from hearing disputes covered by the Act's grievance process, meaning

employees must use the established process instead of taking separate legal action."

But the BCAS argued that the courts are their only "recourse" because, otherwise, the public service is tasked to investigate themselves.

"It has not been an effective remedy system because anti-Black discrimination is very systemic and deeply entrenched in these processes," said Thompson.

He expanded: "if my manager treats me unfairly or discriminated against me, my manager gets to determine if they did anything wrong. And then at the next level of the grievance process, their manager gets to determine if they did anything wrong, and so on for three or four levels."

Gripes with the grievance process

One of the other 'recourses' for federal public servants is to file a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC)—the independent commission that Canadians can turn to if they want to file a human rights complaint against the government or a federal department.

If the CHRC finds a complaint meets its criteria, the organization can then refer the case to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal for a more in-depth inquiry.

But Thompson pointed to a 2023 Senate report that found incidents of systemic discrimination and a "toxic workplace" within the CHRC itself as proof that the current complaints systems doesn't work for grievances of racism.

"Canada's human rights watchdog discriminated against populations that it's responsible for protecting. Workplace dis-

crimination can have catastrophic, profound and lasting effects on employees and their families," said PSG Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard (East Preston), in a statement last December.

Betchi, also a former CHRC employee who filed a complaint against the organization, said she saw first hand how the commission would dismiss race-based complaints—something that the Senate report backs up with data.

"Several witnesses confirmed that race-based complaints are often dismissed at a higher rate than other discrimination complaints, with fewer cases referred to the Tribunal. For example, CHRC data indicates that in 2018, just six per cent of cases based on race, colour or national or ethnic origin were referred to the Tribunal," according to the Senate Human Rights Committee report.

Betchi said the systems in place for staff to file a complaint against their employer needs to be "completely dismantled and rebuilt."

"Those systems are also infested with the same systemic discriminations that we're screaming about. So these the systems that [the government is] referring or you're telling people to go to will not help them. In the contrary it's going to harm them even more," said Betchi.

A CHRC spokesperson told *The Hill Times* that it supports the implementation of the Senate report's recommendations, and that the "Commission has been improving how we handle race-based discrimination complaints"

When *The Hill Times* asked for an update on the measures the CHRC has taken since the Senate report came out, the commission pointed to a number of actions, including "specialized training on how to screen race-based complaints, including training specifically about anti-Black racism," as well as monthly reporting of race-based complaints that are "reviewed for statistical deviation."

Black Action Plan

The federal government has launched an 'Action Plan for Black Public Servants' to help improve supports to its Black employees.

"We unequivocally stand against all forms of discrimination, including anti-Black racism," said Myah Tomasi, press secretary to Treasury Board President Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.), in a statement to *The Hill Times*.

"Our government is committed to promoting a safe and inclusive environment where Black public servants are equally recognized for their contributions and are provided every opportunity to succeed. To do this, the Government of Canada must take deliberate steps to remove any barriers and challenge biases across the public service."

Some of the government steps on this issue include nearly \$50-million being earmarked towards mental health supports and

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Polls apart: concern for Quebec municipal election clash if federal date moved back



Democratic Institutions Minister Dominic LeBlanc's Bill C-65, Electoral Participation Act, is currently at the Procedure and House Affairs Committee. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Moving the fixed federal election date from Oct. 20, 2025, to Oct. 27 to avoid the Diwali holiday could inadvertently affect turnout at Quebec's municipal elections, PROC has heard.

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

Shifting the 2025 federal election by a week to avoid clashing with a religious holiday could inadvertently affect turnout in Quebec's municipal poll that would be held six days later, a committee scrutinizing the government's reforms to the Canada Elections Act has heard.

"It would create even more electoral fatigue, and essentially Quebec's municipal elections would pay the price of that," Jean-François Daoust, professor at Université de Sherbrooke's school of applied politics, told the Procedure and House Affairs Committee (PROC) in French.

If the 44th Parliament runs its full course, the next election will fall on Oct. 20, 2025, the same date as Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights. But that will change if Parliament passes Bill C-65, the Electoral Participation Act, which proposes to move the election date back a week to Oct. 27.

The bill, a cornerstone of the now-defunct supply-and-confidence agreement between the Liberals and the NDP, is currently before PROC. Included in the bill is the addition of two advance voting days, improved access to voting in long-term care homes, voting offices at post-secondary education institutions, and a study to

determine whether voting day should be extended from one to three days.

The bill also creates new bans on foreign interference in elections, changes to third-party financial contributions, and what parties must include in their privacy policies.

But it was Sec. 5 of the act—containing the date change—that took up much of the attention of the committee meetings on Oct. 31 and Nov. 5.

The government has justified the move as ensuring that the election will not be

held during Diwali. But while the bill was drafted between the Liberals and NDP, the latter party sought an amendment to remove the delayed election date in late May. The Conservatives have attacked the government on the date shift, alleging that it was motivated by a desire to see MPs qualify for a pension.

The proposed date shift was welcomed by Toronto Arya Samaj, a Markham, Ont.-based Hindu charity, in a briefing to the Procedure and House Affairs Committee. "It is important to note that a previously

scheduled Ontario municipal election was held on Diwali in September 2022, which resulted in lower voter turnout and caused consternation among thousands of voters across several communities," said the letter from president Vuc Gyana Singh and general secretary Lita Henry.

"By scheduling elections on this day, barriers are created for Hindus who wish to fully participate in both their civic duties, and their cherished cultural and religious practices."

The Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association also backed the date change. In a letter to PROC chair Liberal MP Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Man.), the organization cited the 2022 Ontario municipal elections as a "barrier to many Canadians to access and participate in democracy and was a clear misunderstanding of the diversity within the province."

"Whether its Diwali, Eid, Bandi Chhor Divas, Rosh Hashana, or Easter, we must understand and respect the diversity of our country and ensure that all people don't have to choose between their cultural and religious practices and their access to involvement in our democratic institutions," wrote chair and founder Ryan Singh and vice-chair Alim Lila.

According to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, average turnout in the province's 2022 municipal elections was 32.9 per cent, down from 38.4 per cent in 2018. Just under a quarter of eligible voters cast ballots in Brampton, Ont., where approximately 40 per cent of the population is South Asian. At the time, CBC News reported that non-competitive races and voter fatigue had also played a part in province-wide low turnout.

But while low turnout in a past Ontario municipal election was used to support the date shift, future local government elections in Quebec are being used to argue the opposite.

The province's municipal elections are scheduled for Nov. 2, 2025. Pushing the federal election date to just six days before the municipal vote would create "an overlap of at least 37 out of 45 days" in the campaigns, according to a submission from the Union des municipalités du Québec.

Martin Damphousse, UMQ president and mayor of Varennes, Que., warned in the submission that the shift could have a negative effect on municipal turnout.

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News

Liberal MP Arya urges Hindu Canadians to hold politicians accountable who don't condemn Khalistanis involved in violence at Hindu temple

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh has accused Liberal MP Chandra Arya of aligning with the India's stance by questioning the credibility of Canadian politicians and law enforcement agencies.

BY ABBAS RANA

Following a violent clash between Hindu worshippers and pro-Khalistan supporters at a Brampton, Ont. temple on Nov. 3, a heated exchange has erupted between NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh and Liberal MP Chandra Arya, with the Ottawa-area MP urging the Hindu community to hold politicians accountable if they fail to name names in the incident.

"The fact that no elected official has publicly named Khalistanis who were responsible for the violent attack on Hindus at a Hindu temple demands that politicians need to be held accountable," wrote Arya (Nepean, Ont.) in an email to *The Hill Times*.

In a social media post on Nov. 3 after the altercation, Arya wrote that the incident has crossed a "red line", and that it appears to him that "Khalistanis" have infiltrated Canadian politics and law enforcement agencies.

"The attack by Khalistanis on the Hindu Canadian devotees inside the premises of the Hindu Sabha temple in Brampton shows how deep and brazen Khalistani violent extremism has become in Canada," wrote Arya on X. "I begin to feel that there is a small grain of truth in the reports that in addition to Canadian political apparatus, Khalistanis have effectively infiltrated into our law enforcement agencies."

Arya told *The Hill Times* that his claims are based on news reports indicating that an off-duty police officer participated in the demonstration outside the temple. He also noted that law enforce-



Liberal MP Chandra Arya has called on all Hindu Canadians to hold politicians accountable who fail to name names of those involved in the altercation at the Brampton Hindu temple on Nov. 3. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

ment agencies have taken no action "over several years when Khalistanis celebrated acts of terrorism and engaged in hate crimes."

In response, Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) described Arya's comments as aligning with the Indian government's stance against the Canadian government and law enforcement officials. Singh condemned all forms of violence, especially at places of worship, and urged Arya to prioritize Canadian interests over those of the Indian government.

"I do want to take a moment [to] talk about Mr. Arya: this is someone who constantly repeats the lines of the Indian government, a government—mind you—that is under allegations that they've engaged in a campaign of terror impacting Canadians that involved shootings, that involved deaths, that involved threats to Canadians," Singh told reporters in a scrum on the Hill on Nov. 4. "So it is very problematic that an elected Canadian official is parroting the lines of a foreign government that engaged in allegations of serious violence and terror against Canadians. So he should stop. We should be putting Canadians first, putting our country first, and not parroting the lines of a foreign government."

The exchange between the two politicians followed a violent

incident on Nov. 3 between pro-Khalistan Sikhs and Hindu worshippers outside the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton, Ont. Protesters claimed they were demonstrating against the visit of Indian consular officials who were hosting a financial workshop for seniors at the temple, alleging that Indian diplomats use such events to gather information on pro-Khalistan activists. The clash resulted in the arrest of three individuals, and an off-duty police officer was suspended for participating in the protest.

The incident was condemned by all federal party leaders, as well as Ontario Premier Doug Ford, and Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown. In a post on X, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also condemned the incident, and criticized the Canadian government over the recent expulsion of Indian diplomats.

"I strongly condemn the deliberate attack on a Hindu temple in Canada," said Modi on X. "Equally appalling are the cowardly attempts to intimidate our diplomats. Such acts of violence will never weaken India's resolve. We expect the Canadian government to ensure justice and uphold the rule of law."

The temple where the altercation occurred is located in Liberal MP Maninder Sidhu's (Brampton

East, Ont.) riding. He declined to be interviewed for this article, and instead referred to a statement he issued on X.

"Everyone should be able to practice their faith without fear of violence. I have been made aware of acts of violence at the Hindu Sabha Mandir and strongly condemn all acts of violence. I have spoken with [Peel] Police Chief Nish [Nishan Duraipappah] and have been assured that officers are at the side of the Mandir. I call for calm amongst all residents as the police investigate," Sidhu wrote on Nov. 3.

On Nov. 4, Peel Police issued a public safety alert after discovering that some demonstrators near the same Hindu temple were carrying weapons. Photos from the demonstration showed some participants draped in the Indian national flag. Following the safety alert, police declared the protest unlawful, and dispersed the group.

"The individuals who are seeking to foment violence, division and shared in no way represent either the Sikh community or the Hindu community," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) told reporters last week.

Brown told CBC that he is considering banning demonstrations outside places of worship.

"I worry that this is going to become compounded if we don't

clearly say that there is a line in the sand that cannot be crossed," Brown told CBC last week.

Brown said that the neighbouring city of Vaughan already has a similar law in place, which has not been challenged on constitutional grounds.

"My hope is we're going to pass this bylaw. If someone wants to challenge it in the courts, they can. But I believe it is needed to protect a foundational value in our country, which is religious freedom," Brown told CBC.

The Canadian National Council of Hindus, and the Hindu Federation, along with temple leaders and Hindu advocacy groups, made a statement disallowing all politicians from using temple platforms for political purposes "until they demonstrate concrete efforts to address the issue of Khalistan extremism."

This altercation comes at a time when relations between India and Canada are at a low point. In mid-October, the Canadian government expelled six Indian diplomats, including the high commissioner, alleging their involvement in the killing of Canadian Sikh activist Harjeet Singh Nijjar, as well as broader efforts to gather data on dissidents through clandestine techniques, homicides, harassment, and intimidation. In a tit-for-tat response, the Indian government also expelled six Canadian diplomats.

The Indian government has strongly denied any involvement in the killing or in covert intelligence gathering.

Last week, Trudeau and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) clashed in the House of Commons, each accusing the other of politicizing the issue.

"The silence of the Conservative leader is deafening when it comes to what is happening in the South Asian communities right now, and it is a real shame," said Trudeau in the House on Nov. 6. "Not only is he not stepping forward to talk about how all Canadians must stand together and all South Asian Canadians, Sikh, Hindu, Jain and Buddhist, are celebrating together this weekend, but he even refuses to take the issue seriously enough to get the security clearance necessary to be briefed on threats to Canada and to Canadians."

Poilievre fired back, accusing Trudeau's policies of creating divisions in the country.

"Now we know the prime minister's real agenda. He wants to distract from all the economic misery he has caused at home, and so he uses divisions here at home," said Poilievre. "These divisions are as a result of him. Under his leadership, we have seen a 251 per cent increase in hate crimes, firebombings of synagogues, bullets shot at Jewish children's schools, a hundred churches burned and vandalized, and now we see sectarian riots on the streets of Brampton. This never happened before the prime minister."

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Trump return to White House will test ‘rocky’ relationship with Trudeau

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump is someone who ‘carries a grudge,’ but Prime Minister Justin Trudeau must find a way to ‘make the relationship work,’ say observers.

BY NEIL MOSS & IAN CAMPBELL

After years of testy dynamics between Justin Trudeau and Donald Trump, the Republican’s return to the White House will force the prime minister to overcome discord with the unpredictable president-elect.

The ebb and flow of Canada-U.S. ties has often been subject to how its leaders interact—from a close link between then-prime minister Brian Mulroney and then-president Ronald Reagan to the vitriol that characterized the turbulent relationship between then-prime minister John Diefenbaker and then-president John F. Kennedy.

“As we know, Trump carries a grudge,” said former Canadian diplomat Colin Robertson, who had multiple postings in the United States during his career in the foreign service.

Robertson, now a senior adviser at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, said he expects Trudeau “will try his best to put things right.”



United States president-elect Donald Trump will return to the White House in January 2025, after winning the Nov. 5 presidential election. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

“Trudeau’s not going to kiss the ring,” said Robertson, “but the job of the prime minister is to have a relationship with the president.”

As of 10:00 a.m. ET on Nov. 7, *The New York Times* had declared 295 electoral college votes for Donald Trump compared to 226 for Democratic candidate and current Vice-President Kamala Harris. Arizona and Nevada have not yet been called, but are expected to go to Trump and take his total to 312. Trump is also expected to win more than 50 per cent of the popular vote. The exact final tally could take days but presently sits at 50.9 per cent for Trump compared to 47.6 per cent for Harris.

Trump and Trudeau’s (Papineau, Que.) personal links reached a nadir during the 2018 G7 summit when Trump called Trudeau “meek and mild” following the Charlevoix, Que., meeting. In 2022, Trump—then out of the White House—called Trudeau a “far-left lunatic.”

Canada’s G7 sherpa during that 2018 summit said Trump didn’t have close links with any leaders from the Group of Seven, apart from then-Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe.

“The relationship with our prime minister was a bit episodic,” said now Independent Senator Peter Boehm (Ontario), noting the Trump/Trudeau dynamic started well before taking a turn.

“They’ve had their differences because leaders stick up for their own interests,” he said. “But Mr. Trudeau is always quick to congratulate the president-elect. We’ll find a way to work with him, I suspect.”

Robertson said Trudeau’s first responsibility should be a congratulatory phone call to Trump. When U.S. President Joe Biden won in 2020, the first call he received from a foreign leader was from Trudeau.

“That would be the first thing I do. I’d get that phone call in just because I think that will be an indication to Trump, and those around him, that Trudeau wants to continue to work with him—which we do because we have to,” he said.

Trudeau and Trump spoke on the phone on the evening of Nov. 6, discussing trade and security issues, according to CBC News. Trudeau was not Trump’s first phone call, but one of several that day.

Dalhousie University political science professor Lori Turnbull described Trudeau and Trump as having a “rocky and inconsistent” relationship, but said at least the two are not “unfamiliar” with each other.

While building a close network with American officials will be key, she added that the leaders’ direct links remains vital because there is “no replacement” for the rapport between an American president and a Canadian prime minister.

Turnbull said the Liberal government will have to “make the relationship work as best they can,” and pointed to the

“institutional memory” it can pull from experience during the first Trump presidency from 2017-2021.

The Republicans have also regained control of the Senate, while the House of Representatives remains too close to call. It may be several days or more until a number of House and Senate seats are determined.

“It’s not that [Trump]’s new,” said Turnbull. “I think this would be a very different thing if they didn’t have the experience of working with him before.”

Several of Trudeau’s ministers who played key roles during Trump’s first term remain around the cabinet table, albeit in different roles, she noted. Chief among them is Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.), who was foreign affairs minister during much of Trump’s first term, and played a key role in re-negotiating the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Que.) served as trade minister at the time, though he did not hold the U.S. file.

“Maybe there’s some relationship building that can be resurrected,” said Turnbull, who noted new connections must also be forged given many of the key people around Trump have changed.

In a scrum on Nov. 6, Freeland addressed comments to Canadians who are anxious about the prospect of a Trump presidency.

“Canada will be absolutely fine,” she said, adding the country has a “strong relationship” with the United States and Trump’s team.

“Let’s remember that our trading relationship today is governed by the trade deal concluded by President Trump himself and his team. That’s really, really important.”

During the his election campaign, Trump said that he wanted to make the CUSMA a “much better deal,” calling the clause that mandates a review in 2026, a “re-negotiation provision,” according to an October CNN report.

Freeland also appeared to directly address Trump’s team and concerns that the “America first” approach could shift ties.

“Our partnership is good for American workers. Canadian workers have high labour standards, high environmental standards. Our partnership in no way undercuts American workers. I know that is at the heart of the concerns of President Trump and his team because that is at the heart of our new NAFTA deal that we concluded with them,” said Freeland.

Turnbull said the PMO will likely focus on the economic aspects of the relationship, particularly trade and integrated supply chains between the two countries.

“It wasn’t easy during [current U.S. President Joe] Biden either,” added Turnbull. “It’s not like we were down there and got everything we wanted.”



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Ottawa will ensure the ‘extraordinary friendship and alliance between Canada and the United States continues.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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Editorial

The U.S. has made its choice. So must Canada

The people of the United States have made their choice, and the rest of the world must now live with it.

Canada is not the United States, despite the many similarities. May one of those similarities never be the willingness to elect a charlatan and convicted criminal with dictatorial aspirations.

To be clear, nobody currently within a whisker of leading this country is anywhere close to exhibiting these traits. But our neighbours to the south are a cautionary tale that every Canadian must heed.

Of course, for those without scruples, there are also lessons to be learned. If voters are disillusioned enough with the system and tired enough of the status quo, they will overlook the most appalling and disqualifying qualities—naked racism, xenophobia, misogyny, sexual violence—if the person who exhibits them says they will tear down the old foundations.

That's not including the rump of people for whom the racism, xenophobia, and misogyny are selling points.

Any Canadian politician for whom alarm bells are not ringing at the results of Nov. 5 ought to hand in their resignation because they are entirely ill-equipped for the dangerous times we live in. Sinclair Lewis' deliberately ironic book *It Can't Happen Here*

is as much a warning for any liberal democracy.

The warning is not just for politicians to be careful what they say, to not cross certain lines in the quest for power.

It's also a warning for those already in power to ensure that the conditions are not ripe for the reactionaries to thrive, and to court voters with their promises to tear down the old system and start anew.

The best way to combat that is by maintaining a system worth preserving—one that addresses the needs of voters, that is free of corruption and cronyism, that is transparent and demonstrably working in favour of the citizens for whom it is supposedly designed.

And for those who consider flirting with the recipe that made last week's result to the south possible, there is a warning. Once the system is broken, once norms are erased, the weapons wielded in your pursuit of power will be just as easily seized by your opponents. Nobody wins in a spiral to the bottom.

The world has changed, after Nov. 5, 2024, perhaps irrevocably. But there is plenty that Canada can do to inoculate itself from the chaos that is to come.

Our leaders have a question to ask themselves—will you help, or will you become part of the problem?

The Hill Times



Letters to the Editor



Conservatives are gullible, people are gullible: William Perry

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre—who is endeavouring to gain the support of People's Party Leader Maxime Bernier's base—chooses to push fear of massive transformation, turmoil, and chaos underway in our society. And fears about how those transformations will impact lives that are largely defined by self-interest, power, and money.

Conservatives are gullible. People are gullible. The common complaint: politicians repeat the same empty promises election after election.

Why do people sometimes seem so trusting as to be gullible? In the 18th century, Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid suggested that humans have a natural propensity to be trusting. Reid's reasoning rests on the assumption that humans have a natural propensity to speak the truth. In this cynical age, few may be inclined to agree with Reid's assessment. Yet, when we think of it, he has a point. In spite of all the lies and deception that so easily spring to mind, the majority of what we communicate is—approximately at least—truthful. Think of all the things you've said today. How many of these statements were lies? Maybe one or two people do seem to engage in inconsequential distortions

fairly regularly, but probably nothing like the majority or even a sizeable minority.

For instance, saying that conspiracy theorists are not gullible doesn't mean that their mechanisms of vigilance are working well. When you believe that the king of England is a lizard, clearly, something has gone wrong. But the problem is not too much trust, but a lack of trust—in most other people, in the government, etc.—and misplaced trust.

The main problem, I surmise, is not gullibility, but its opposite: conservatism. Rather than changing their opinions too quickly, Conservatives take too long to adjust. Evolutionarily, that makes much more sense. When in doubt, it must have been safer for our ancestors to reject communicated information than to accept it. A measure of conservatism should be expected: we are more Doubting Thomases than Pinocchios.

The idea that people are gullible is quite deeply anchored, and I don't expect to change many people's minds with this letter. In any case, accusations of gullibility or that another interpretation should be favoured.

William Perry
 Victoria, B.C.

Please aim for fewer grammar errors: reader

Re: "Mo money, less problems," (*The Hill Times*, Nov. 1). Please correct the poor grammar in the headline about problems. It may be a cute twist of words, but is atrocious grammar. I see this all the

time on social media. I expect better from journalists. It should read: "Mo money, fewer problems."

K. Elaine Foulkes
 Sutton West, Ont.

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Kamala Harris hits the concrete ceiling

Once again, a woman for president was just too much for Americans to bear. Kamala Harris was soundly beaten by an angry white man.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



U.S. Vice-President Kamala Harris faced a double whammy. As a racialized woman, she fought prejudice against her gender and her race, writes Sheila Copps. *Wikimedia Commons photograph*

OTTAWA—After his decisive victory against U.S. Vice-President Kamala Harris last week, Donald Trump needs to get some new hats.

The stench of sexism and racism wafted from voting booths as those who wanted to turn back the clock cast their ballots for a convicted sex offender.

Trump's numbers in most areas exceeded his previous election bids. In his first attempt, Trump made it to the White House with the electoral vote, but not the popular vote. On Nov. 5, he got it all. There is nothing stopping him now.

David Axelrod, a Democratic adviser to multiple presidents,

said after the vote that racism and sexism both played a role in Harris' loss. Given the United States has previously voted for a Black president in Barack Obama, one has to assume that gender was the deciding Harris negative.

An exit poll by Edison Research found that Harris received the majority of her support from women and minorities. As for women, she won 54 per cent of

their votes, while Trump secured 44 per cent. However, the white vote generally gave Trump an edge of 12 per cent. As for Latinos, they moved toward Trump in numbers not seen in the 2020 race.

On the race front, post-election numbers show that Harris garnered 80 per cent of the Black vote, but Obama received 93 per cent. Why was there a 13 per cent

drop? Was it because some Black men couldn't vote for a woman?

Women all over the world are mourning the Harris loss because it felt that, once again, a chance to elect a woman president in American was shattered not by a glass ceiling, but a concrete one.

Harris ran a flawless campaign. She was positive, upbeat, and energetic compared to a waddling Trump who bored crowds with his incoherent, droning speeches.

A woman voter dressed as a handmaid at a Pennsylvania voting booth said it all. Without uttering a word, the anonymous woman sent a clear message of what was at stake in the election.

Margaret Atwood, renowned Canadian author of *The Handmaid's Tale*, made her own plea to American voters to support Harris for president.

According to her publisher, Atwood's novel explores "themes of powerless women in a patriarchal society, loss of female agency and individuality, suppression of women's reproductive rights, and the various means by which women resist and try to gain individuality and independence."

That was the narrative for women in this election.

Once again, a woman for president was just too much for Americans to bear. Harris, who took over the Democratic reins from an ailing President Joe Biden 100 days ago, was soundly beaten by an angry white man.

Trump's multiple character flaws were on painful display in the campaign, including the fact that almost no one who served with him in the White House supported him. His last week of campaigning was a disaster.

The hope that former congresswoman Liz Cheney be put

before a firing squad prefaced by a self-inflicted wound at Trump's Madison Square Garden rally in New York. Multiple participants levelled insults at women, Blacks, and Jews.

Harris herself was alleged to be a sex worker working with her pimps. Then came the now infamous insult to Puerto Ricans when a comedian called their home a floating island of garbage.

Harris faced a double whammy. As a racialized woman, she fought prejudice against her gender and her race.

Despite her comfortable majority support with women, the men did her in. The more education they had, the more likely they were to support her. But opposition from young men and those with less than a high school education was ferocious.

Harris cannot be faulted on her campaign. Her message was solid, and she delivered it with an ease of confidence reminiscent of a real leader.

Now Democrats must reboot while MAGA Republicans are already discussing a successor to the aging president-elect. In a media interview, a young Trump voter said he thought the perfect successor was vice-president-elect J.D. Vance.

The man who thinks America is being run by a "bunch of childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices they've made and so they want to make the rest of the country miserable, too" is the next great white hope.

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

The Hill Times

The coming ad war

If the Conservatives see their poll numbers dropping, they'll quickly respond by increasing their own ad buys and intensifying their attacks on the Liberals.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



as impressive as it is—might be a little bit deceptive.

After all, it's easy to run up the score when the other side hasn't even bothered to show up on the playing field.

And that's essentially what's been happening in Canada's political game.

For the past year or so, the Conservatives have spent buckets of money—about \$8.5-million—on advertising to both promote their leader, Pierre Poilievre, and to degrade Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's governing Liberals.

I mean, who hasn't seen one of those Conservative "Axe the Tax" ads?

On the other hand, during that same period, the Liberals have spent comparatively little on advertising (about \$380,000).

So, given this advertising mismatch, it shouldn't be surprising that the Conservatives seem to be winning the communications war, which is helping them in the polls.

However, in the weeks ahead, the game could get a little more

competitive since it seems the Liberals and their allies are finally getting ready to fight back.

Indeed, according to media reports, a left-wing, third-party group called "Protecting Canada," has in the past few weeks already spent about \$130,000 in swing ridings on digital ads designed to unite progressives against Poilievre's agenda.

More specifically, using the slogan "That's Poilievre. But it's not Canada," Protecting Canada plans to assail the Conservative leader over his policies on pensions, gun control, abortion, and child care.

Says group spokesperson Megana Ramaswami: "Our ambition is to match Conservative infrastructure dollar for dollar, and spend as much as it takes."

Keep in mind, this is not some amateur operation. Media reports indicate Protecting Canada has plenty of cash, and ties to former Liberal and NDP staffers and consultants.

I also suspect other left-wing third-party groups—mainly funded by labour unions—will soon pop up and start taking swipes at Poilievre.

But what should concern the Conservatives more is that the Liberal Party itself is preparing to launch its own well-funded counterstrike.

For instance, according to a recent *Toronto Star* article, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau "is testing a group of digital ads and is producing a series of broadcast advertising, including negative ads targeting his Conservative rival."

Interestingly, *The Star* article also notes that the Liberal broadcast ads currently in production are designed to "paint the contrast with Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre."

I mention that only because whenever political consultants talk about "contrast" ads it's usually a euphemism for savage attack ads.

So, yes, things could start getting really ugly.

At any rate, my point is the Conservative Party is going to start getting pummelled by its political enemies, and the closer

we get to a federal election the more that pummelling will likely increase.

All things being equal, that means we should expect the Conservative lead in the polls to lessen.

That, in turn, will allow Trudeau to triumphantly proclaim that the Conservatives have stalled in the polls, and that his Liberals now have all the momentum.

Yet, any advantage the Liberals gain might not be enough.

Certainly, if the Conservatives see their poll numbers dropping, they'll be quick to respond by increasing their own ad buys, and by intensifying their attacks on the Liberals.

Plus, given the huge advantage the Conservatives possess when it comes to raising money, I'd argue it'll be hard for the Liberals to match them dollar for dollar when it comes to duking it out in an all-out advertising war.

So, the Conservatives will still have an edge, but at the very least the Liberals won't go down without a fight.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times

Comment



Donald Trump will never be judged by a jury of his peers for triggering a coup attempt on Jan. 6, 2021, that would have overthrown the free and fair election of Joe Biden as president in 2020. Wikimedia Commons photograph

No process replaces due process in the United States

Vile excesses that would once have carried consequences are now accepted as just part of the political noise.

Michael
Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—It didn't take long for the unsettling reality of a second term for Donald Trump to show up.

As everyone knows, special counsel Jack Smith has pursued criminal charges against Trump on two fronts: unlawfully taking classified documents when he left the White House, and obstructing justice to keep them; and for triggering a coup attempt on Jan. 6, 2021, that would have overthrown the free and fair election of Joe Biden as president in 2020.

Without waiting for Trump to be sworn in next January, Smith is now in talks with the Department of Justice to make these charges disappear. Why? Not for want of evidence backing up his cases against Trump. The documentation Smith has filed is both voluminous and detailed.

The process is being stopped on technical and obtuse constitutional grounds. It has been determined by legal experts that a sitting president cannot be indicted or tried. The bottom line? Trump will never be judged by a jury of his peers in these cases, as anyone else would have been. That is for mere subjects, not the king.

Legal experts are also betting that even in the Stormy Daniels hush-money case—where Trump has already been convicted of 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to hide a payment to the porn star—he will not be sentenced.

That was supposed to happen a few days hence, but now that Trump is president-elect, Judge Juan Merchan is expected to find a way to cancel or defer the sentencing. If he does, it will mean Trump was right when he said after his conviction that the “real verdict” will be rendered in the case on Nov. 5.

No process replaces due process, a change that should have people worried. Remember, Trump heads back to the White House with a Supreme Court ruling protecting him from prosecution for future crimes he might commit as president in the conduct of his duties.

In addition to the rule of law, Trump's election was also a profound setback for Black people and women in the United States. During the campaign, Democratic candidate Kamala Harris was

frequently described by Trump as “stupid,” someone who had something “wrong” with her.

Trump's running mate and now vice-president-elect J.D. Vance went further into the slime. He boasted that the Republicans were going to put out the trash, and that the “trash” was called Kamala Harris.

The obvious racism and gender-bashing never led to a hue and cry against Trump or Vance. Telling. There was a time when it would have.

Back in 2002, Republican Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott praised segregationist Strom Thurmond. Thurmond, who ran for the U.S. presidency back in 1948, wanted to keep Black Americans out of white schools and neighbourhoods. Lott said that maybe the country wouldn't have “all these problems” if Thurmond had won in 1948.

Lott's remarks at a birthday party became public, and quickly cost him his job. Trump and Vance offered their racist and misogynist comments to huge audiences in front of the cameras during the campaign. The pair went on to win a decisive electoral victory.

How could they get away with it? How could it be that society was moving backwards? Look no further than Trump's vulgar and relentless norm-breaking on all fronts that began when he first came down that golden elevator and entered politics. Vile excesses that would once have carried

consequences are now accepted as just part of the political noise.

Worse looms ahead. Although no one knows for sure what promises Trump will keep and which ones he will break, he has painted himself into a corner on immigration and border issues.

His grotesque slanders against Mexicans, Venezuelans, and others were at the heart of his successful election campaign. Having vowed to hunt down illegals and “throw them the hell out,” using the National Guard if necessary, Trump is pretty much obliged to act.

If these pending deportations prove breathlessly widespread, and as ugly as Trump's separation of illegal migrant families in his first term, the U.S. may see mass detention of undocumented immigrants on American soil.

Some Democratic office holders—including Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey—have already said that they will not assist in any wholesale round up. Instead of taking part, they would take Trump to court.

All the coming trouble isn't focused on social or domestic policy. In pursuit of his protectionist economic agenda, Trump has vowed to impose a tariff of at least 10 per cent on goods coming into the U.S.

In the case of China, those tariffs could run as high as 60 per cent. Apart from retaliation from other countries, Trump's tariffs would also bring much higher prices, and fan the flames

of inflation. Still, he says “tariffs” is the most beautiful word in the English language.

David Remnick, editor of *New Yorker* magazine, recently warned MSNBC that Trump's foreign policy could also soon be a major headache. That's because Trump is not interested in the complexities of problems, history, or the rule of law. He runs instead on self-interested impulsiveness.

When asked what Trump might now tell the Israeli prime minister about the current war in Gaza, Remnick said he would probably advise Benjamin Netanyahu to do whatever he has to do.

That is about as far from calling for a ceasefire as it is possible to get. Netanyahu knows that war keeps him in office, and away from an election and his long delayed day in court on corruption charges.

There is one other prospect that should keep people up at night with Trump headed back to the White House. In his first term, he came into office without much of a plan, and with no experience in government. This time around, he will arrive at the White House with a team of loyalists who have a detailed agenda out in the Project 2025 document.

Time will tell if those critics have it right when they say that the Trump team's main goal will be to increase executive power at the expense of other branches of government. Trump has made clear that he would like to have more influence, for example, over Department of Justice prosecutions.

Of course. How better to fight those “enemies within” than calling the shots at the DOJ?

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times

Trump, Trudeau and an ominous thunder



The good news is that Donald Trump, pictured, will be gone for good in four years. It will be up to the next U.S. government to repair the devastation he leaves, or not, writes Susan Riley. Photograph courtesy of Gage Skidmore/Flickr

Donald Trump's return will only make things worse. He's called climate change 'a scam,' EVs useless, and boasted that America 'has more liquid gold than any country in the world'—promising, repeatedly, to drill and frack every last drop.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



CHELSEA, QUE.—Two terrible events happened last week, but one is worse.

First, of course, Donald Trump was re-elected president of the United States, with all the chaos, hostility, and hurt that will entail. Second—and strangely more dire—temperatures reached the 20 C in parts of Ontario at a

time when people are normally fretting about freezing rain and getting out the snow tires.

A few pleasant fall days, a record dry October, and an unseasonal thunderstorm or two? You can hear the rain-soaked denizens of Vancouver: cry me an atmospheric river! Nor will this sound like hardship to people in Spain, watching their cars propelled down narrow streets, like floating dinky toys, by raging floodwater. Same in Florida, where hurricanes and lesser storms continue to fester offshore, promising more than a tropical breeze.

Point taken.

But all these phenomena are linked. All are harbingers of a changing climate, a change that promises to become more harrowing and irreversible with every passing month. The cause is no mystery: greenhouse gas emissions from the fossil fuel sector. But few are the politicians or governments with the courage to face down the powerful oil industry, to challenge the claim that the jobs and profits they generate now are more important than the devastation that is certainly coming.

Trump's return will only make things worse. He has called climate change "a scam," EVs useless, and boasted that America "has more liquid gold than any country in the world"—promising, repeatedly, to drill and frack every last drop. He will severely

trim U.S. President Joe Biden's trillion-dollar Inflation Reduction Act, a benchmark package that includes \$390-billion in consumer incentives and funding for clean energy, and regulations on methane, endangered species, and various pollutants. Forward-looking states and cities will continue the fight, but without federal support.

Personally, Trump is probably more interested in returning to his regular golf game—and his ego-boosting rallies—once he takes office in January than he is in following through on his many threats. Ending wars in Ukraine and the Middle East will only take a day or two, he says, but deporting those 20 million undocumented workers could be more time consuming.

However, as reported in April, he did promise American oil executives that he would remove all impediments—that is, environmental protections—to their booming sector in return for a \$1-billion donation to his campaign. So even if he forgets, they won't.

In fact, it shouldn't take long to gut American leadership (such as it is) in the fight against a 1.5 C increase in average global temperatures—and, as a consequence, make Canada's more modest efforts extraordinarily difficult, given how closely aligned our economies are.

That said, no one should mistake Canada for a bold cli-

mate leader. The day before the U.S. election, Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson and Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault finally introduced their government's belated plan to limit greenhouse emissions from the oil patch—emissions that, alone, account for 30 to 40 per cent of the national total. The feds are proposing a "cap and trade" system, which aims to take effect in 2030 and, ultimately, reduce the sector's emissions by around one-third.

But it will not—and this needs to be underscored—stop or even slow oil production anytime soon, despite the lamentations of the industry. In fact, Guilbeault was at pains to explain that the federal plan envisions a 16 per cent increase in oil production by 2030. And while declining methane emissions—prodded by other federal legislation—will help the industry meet the new targets, Canada continues to sell record-breaking amounts of oil to the U.S. And the Liberal government continues to promote the fiction that remaining emissions will decline thanks to some fantasy technology.

Even this too-little-too-late approach drew fire from Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, as she attended a party convention that gave her a 91 per cent approval rating. Striking a Churchillian pose, she vowed to fight in the courts, in the legislature, and in

the media not only to protect her province's immensely profitable oil sector, but to "unapologetically double our oil and gas production." She continued: "We will build new pipelines, oil and gas facilities, petrochemical plants, hydrogen plants, and more because Alberta is an energy superpower."

What is new is the brazen tone. Neither Smith, the province's major industry, and definitely not the Pierre Poilievre Conservatives are even pretending to care about the baleful impacts of climate change any more, despite the Jasper wildfire, and one poll suggesting some 62 per cent of Albertans are worried about climate change. Like Trump, Smith is determined to wring every last penny of profit from the ground, the environment—and "ideological" federal Liberals—be damned.

That leaves Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as the leading political champion of climate action, but his government is heavily compromised. Around the time Wilkinson and Guilbeault were announcing the long-awaited emissions cap, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland was being grilled at a parliamentary committee on the dubious economics of the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion. It was purchased by the Trudeau government for \$4.5-billion in 2018 and, when it started operating six months ago, costs had ballooned to \$34-billion.

Freeland, with a straight face, told the committee she is "very confident" that the government will recoup the \$34-billion—a claim disputed in previous Parliamentary Budget Office report, and in private assessments by two major banks, which estimated it will take 100 years for the pipeline to break even.

Freeland may soon find herself in a different portfolio in the wake of the Trump victory, which means she won't have to answer for her unsupported claims, or the subsidies her government continues to provide the oil and gas sector for unproven carbon capture and storage projects.

Lately, campaigning politicians of all stripes have turned their attention to the daily financial struggles of many families facing high food costs and too-expensive housing, but few connect the dots: food prices are affected by floods, fires, and blights driven by climate change, which also disrupts supply chains, and is one factor driving up the costs of construction materials.

The good news is that Trump will be gone for good in four years. It will be up to the next U.S. government to repair the devastation he leaves, or not.

As for Canada? We are up next. And, by all means, let's have the climate election that Poilievre so desperately wants. Trudeau has talked the talk on climate to the point of inducing a national coma. Time to walk the walk. Get some better speech writers, fight as if our lives depended on it, and let the chips fall where they may.

Susan Riley is a veteran political columnist who writes regularly for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

Opinion

How to restore relations with India

Notwithstanding the current rupture between governments, it is time to pick up the pieces of a shattered relationship. Here's why.

Fen Osler Hampson
& Lloyd Axworthy

Opinion



Some bilateral relations are simply too big to fail. India is one of them.

The government's decision to expel India's high commissioner to Canada and five other diplomats for allegedly supporting a criminal network that was targeting local members of Canada's Sikh community is but the latest chapter in a relationship that has been on a downward slide for many years.

To be clear: no country can condone the targeted killings of its own citizens, or efforts to intimidate them by other violent means by another country. To run such operations out of its embassy and consulates—as India is accused of doing—is in direct violation of Canadian and international law, and an affront to human rights, decency, and the norms of civilized nations. Indian authorities have behaved recklessly and foolishly.

However, neither side is blameless for the sorry state of the Indo-Canada relationship, which has knocked the Indian pillar out of our Indo-Pacific strategy. Relations have never really recovered since Canada dropped the ball on dire warnings provided by Indian authorities before the Air India bombing in 1985.

India's frustration with Canada's apparent reluctance to work with it to investigate those who exploit loopholes in this nation's porous banking and legal systems to engage in illegal activities such as money laundering, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and other nefarious activities in support of Khalistan independence has reached a boiling point. It is time for our government to put identity

politics and political opportunism aside to ensure that our country is not a haven for terrorism and criminality abroad.

Notwithstanding the current rupture between governments, it is time to pick up the pieces of a shattered relationship.

Here's why.

The thriving Indian diaspora—which numbers roughly 1.4 million Canadians of Indian heritage—is one the world's biggest, ranking seventh overall. The vast network of cultural and people-to-people ties remains strong and vibrant. Indians continue immigrating to Canada in record numbers, which have quadrupled since the last decade. Until the recent visa caps on international students, Indians were the largest foreign national group attending Canadian colleges and universities, with many choosing to stay and work here after graduation. Indians and Canadians have a right to efficient access to consular and diplomatic services in both countries, which are compromised by the current rift in diplomatic relations.

The Indian economy is now the world's fifth largest, with rapidly rising per capita incomes due to its booming economy, which,

on average, has grown annually at roughly six-seven per cent of GDP since the beginning of this century. India has successfully negotiated free trade agreements with many countries, such as South Korea, Japan, Australia, and the United Arab Emirates. India is a priority market for Canada, and a pivotal link to Asian and Pacific markets.

Bilateral pacts and MOUs on nuclear co-operation, double taxation, science and technology, education, etc., should be strengthened by a comprehensive economic partnership, and a foreign investment and promotion agreement with India, which have been under negotiation for many years. That won't happen if relations fail to improve.

India is also a major regional and global player. It is a key member of the so-called Quad, a critical security grouping that includes the United States, Australia, and Japan. It is exploring security partnerships with key ASEAN countries, and also Africa. It is a founding member of the BRICS, which is expanding. As the world's largest democracy, it is an essential counterweight in Asia to Russia and China. India's recent election showed that its party system does have vitality and strength, especially when it comes to checking the central power of its executive.

Our diplomatic rift with India will invariably weaken Canada's efforts to play a more significant role in the Indo-Pacific's evolving security architecture.

To restore relations, we need an "unofficial"—i.e., track-two—high-level group of senior business leaders, former officials, and representatives of educational institutions and civil society drawn from both nations that will work together to deliver recommendations and options to both governments—after widespread consultations—to reinvigorate the relationship. Such an exercise must also address legitimate security concerns in both countries while identifying ways to share intelligence better and build confidence. In addition, such a group could also explore ways to deepen and expand existing networks at the business, educational, and cultural levels to strengthen ties.

In addition, our domestic political parties need to establish rigorous controls on their respective nomination processes—both federally and provincially—to ensure that foreign interests do not game the system for their partisan purposes.

As India's former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru once said: "[F]ear builds its phantoms which are more fearsome than reality itself, and reality, when calmly analyzed and its consequences willingly accepted, loses much of its terror."

Lloyd Axworthy is a former foreign minister of Canada, and author of the new memoir, *Lloyd Axworthy: My Life in Politics*. Fen Osler Hampson is professor at Carleton University.

The Hill Times

As a Hindu woman in Canada, I'm growing concerned about my safety

This is a Canadian issue. The hate that targets one community today can target another tomorrow. We must stand together, reject hate, and demand that our government safeguard the dignity and security of all its citizens. Canada is a place where everyone can coexist in peace, without fear.

Julia Goyal

Opinion



As a Hindu woman born and raised in Canada, I have always cherished this country's dedication to multiculturalism, tolerance, and inclusion. Growing up here, I felt pride in Canada's promise of diversity and acceptance, a place where people of all backgrounds could find safety and belonging. But recent events, like the attack on the Hindu Sabha temple in Brampton, Ont., by pro-Khalistani groups, have left me and many in my community feeling vulnerable and fearful. The very spaces meant for worship and community—where we once found peace and spiritual solace—are now becoming targets of hostility and division.

This is not an isolated incident. Attacks on Hindu temples have occurred with alarming frequency across Canada, part of an unsettling pattern of vandalism, verbal threats, and protest. Temples—symbols of harmony, cultural unity, and community support—are being desecrated by those who seek to stoke division. For me, and for many Hindus, these acts feel deeply personal, underscoring an insidious undercurrent of

polarization that challenges this country's ideals of peaceful co-existence. Our places of sanctuary have become battlegrounds for political agendas unrelated to Canadian values.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's condemnation of this recent attack was appreciated, but words alone cannot ease the fear gripping our community. Verbal support—while necessary—is insufficient. We need tangible, immediate actions to ensure our safety, and to uphold the very values of multiculturalism that Canada claims to champion. Many of us now find ourselves questioning if our temples, our cultural identity, and even our safety are truly protected. The country that once offered freedom and respect is being tainted by forces that seek to instill fear, division, and discord.

As a Hindu woman, this situation is particularly alarming. Temples have always been more than physical structures; they are the heart of our community, places where we connect with our roots, celebrate our traditions, and support one another. Seeing them attacked is an assault on

a deeply personal level, a direct threat to our identity and our sense of belonging in a country we call home. These acts are not simply targeting buildings; they are targeting a community with the intent to intimidate and silence us.

We need a clear and immediate response from the government and law enforcement. This call for action goes beyond rhetoric. Enhanced security measures, stringent consequences for those who incite hate, and a firm stance against extremism are essential. Canada prides itself on being a haven for diversity and inclusivity, yet this recent aggression is forcing Hindu Canadians to live in fear, torn between cultural pride and the unsettling reality of having to look over our shoulders.

The multicultural promise depends on standing together against all forms of intolerance. Attacks like these are not just assaults on Hindu Canadians; they threaten the very fabric of Canadian society. The safety of our families, our traditions, and our right to freely practice our faith are now pressing concerns.

Canada must show that it does not tolerate targeted hostility against any group, and that it is committed to protecting every community that calls this country home.

Our hope—shared by many others—is that Canada will continue to be a place where everyone feels safe. We are not asking for special treatment, only for the right to practice our faith in peace. The government must enact measures that reinforce the safety of all communities and demonstrate, through concrete action, that Canada does not tolerate targeted hostility. Statements of solidarity are not enough; our security cannot be left to words alone.

To my fellow Canadians: this is not just a Hindu issue; it is a Canadian issue. The hate that targets one community today can target another tomorrow. We must stand together, reject hate in every form, and demand that our government safeguard the dignity and security of all its citizens. Let us reaffirm that Canada is a place where everyone—regardless of background, belief, or faith—can coexist in peace, without fear.

Julia Goyal is a PhD candidate at the joint school of public health sciences, and department of mechatronics and mechanical engineering at the University of Waterloo.

The Hill Times

Let's have a safe parliamentary space



The federal government wants to create a securely controlled parliamentary campus to allow the safe and free delivery of personnel and services between the area's buildings, and is in separate talks to close portions of Wellington, Metcalfe, and O'Connor streets. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Supreme Court. Fear of a return occupation left Wellington Street between Elgin and Bank streets closed to vehicles for more than a year afterward.

The federal government did enter into talks with the City of Ottawa, but this fall a spokesperson for Public Services and Procurement Canada Minister Jean-Yves Duclos complained that the city was stalling.

The federal government would like to establish a parliamentary campus which could be securely controlled to allow safe and free delivery of personnel and services between the buildings in that area.

The government is in separate talks now to close certain portions of Wellington, Metcalfe, and O'Connor streets while it redevelops the area called "Block 2" bound by those three streets and Sparks Street.

The city has expressed concern over the cost of infrastructure required to accommodate the federal plan. No one said this was not going to be expensive. The city deserves financial support, but the public desires a safe approach to Parliament Hill.

A vast improvement could also be made to include the streets around the National War Memorial. The National Sentry Program operated by the Canadian Armed Forces between April 9—Vimy Ridge Day—and Nov. 11—Remembrance Day—was reduced to just two short periods this year, leaving the site unguarded if only symbolically. If the area were under parliamentary protection it could be monitored at least by television screens 24 hours a day year-round.

It is time the City of Ottawa and the federal government worked together to establish a Parliamentary Precinct of which Canadians across the country can proud.

Tom MacGregor writes on veterans and military heritage.
The Hill Times

It's time the City of Ottawa and the feds worked together to establish a Parliamentary Precinct of which Canadians across the country can proud.

Tom MacGregor

Opinion



Thousands of people are expected to be at the National War Memorial this Remembrance Day, Nov. 11. At least a few of them should notice the little sign on the edge of the property recognizing the sacrifice of 24-year-old Cpl. Nathan Cirillo of Hamilton's Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders who was shot to death while standing guard over the memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Oct. 22, 2014.

He was shot by a gunman later charged Parliament Hill where he in turn was shot to death by members of the RCMP and Kevin Vickers, the House's then-sergeant-at-arms.

It has been 10 years since those horrific events which drove home the ever-present confusion

among those protecting Parliament Hill. The House and the Senate both had their own protective services while the RCMP was responsible for security outside the buildings. A solution was to merge the three services into one in 2015, the Parliamentary Protective Service under the operational command of the RCMP.

Yet Hill security remains an issue, especially as seen during the 2022 occupation by the so-called Freedom Convoy. The protesters were against vaccination requirements imposed on Canadian truckers crossing the Canada-United States border which would have brought them in line with restrictions imposed on American truckers. The cause attracted people disgruntled with other causes, many of whom were just plain tired of two years of the pandemic, and the restrictions it had imposed on everyday life.

The truckers brought their large vehicles into downtown Ottawa on a Friday afternoon, tying up traffic, honking their horns, and otherwise making life uncomfortable for those living or working in the area. The Ottawa Police allowed them to come into the city, only ensuring that main arteries remain opened, and avoiding any confrontation in the hopes that they would be gone by Monday morning. But they didn't leave.

The failure to prevent such large vehicles from occupying Wellington Street was evident. Blatant disregard for the respect deserving of the Hill was shown with such antics as setting up a

hot tub on Wellington Street in February, and lighting log fires on the pavement. Veterans were horrified when the protesters gathered at the war memorial where one teenager was filmed dancing on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The PPS appealed to the Ottawa Police to do something. Security became such an issue that parliamentarians were forced to cancel a whole day of debate.

Ironically, they were debating the implementation of the Emergencies Act which was used to remove the protesters once the RCMP and the Ontario Provincial Police joined the Ottawa Police to clear the roads.

Clearly, such atrocious behaviour would not have happened if the PPS had controlled that vital stretch of Wellington Street between the Rideau Canal and Lyon Street in front of the



Governor General Mary Simon watches the Remembrance Day parade during the ceremony at the National War Memorial in Ottawa on Nov. 11, 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Opinion

It may be a long time until we reach the other side of this dark valley

Trump has mesmerized a big chunk of the American public, but he doesn't have progressive nations with him, though he will try to bully them. Trump is a last gasp of a dying culture, not the forerunner of the new age.

Douglas Roche

Opinion



EDMONTON—A 28-year-old woman I know is “heart-broken” at what the election of

Donald Trump as U.S. president portends for the world: the agenda for peace will be trampled and militarism will reign. A specialist in climate change issues, she's dependent that Canada's defence spending will skyrocket under Trump's demands, robbing future generations of the funds necessary to combat global warming and to protect everyone's health. Pointing to Trump's egregious conduct, she laments: “Boys are being taught that this is how you act to succeed.”

What can I tell her in this dark hour of catastrophic misjudgment by the American people?

First of all, I have no intention of trying to soothe her with placatory words. She sees her professional future crumbling. I know the feeling, for often in my long professional life, I have had the feeling that the forces of evil are just too much, and too often triumph over goodness. Trump's victory—based on glorifying the powerful and de-humanizing the weak—reinforces the ancient Roman saying: if you want peace, prepare for war.

All my life, I have believed that if you want peace, you must

prepare for peace. This means standing up to the powerful who demand weapons to protect themselves while the marginalized are left to beg for crumbs from the tables of the rich. The circle of death and exploitation seems to go on and cannot be stopped. Humanity, fallen, cannot lift itself out of the abyss.

I do have such thoughts, and I would be false to my young friend if I did not admit it. But I overcome them by recognizing the blossoming of intelligence that is a chief characteristic of our time. Just because he won does not mean that Trump speaks for all Americans; after all, some 70 million people voted against him. We are not fated to Trump's dark view. Rather, we must join with the millions of people who understand that our world has become a human community interconnected in every sphere of activity, and we have the communications and political structures to enable us to interact. This is an empowering discovery, no matter how the American election turned out.

It is the trend-line of history we must pay attention to, not just

the results of one election. The hope for the future I am offering my friend is by no means an empty gesture of consolation. Rather, it is a call to recognize that the immense changes involved in moving the world from the old culture of war to a new culture of peace require a long period of time, perhaps even a century. The new enlightenment will not descend upon either the public or the political decision-makers overnight. We have to slog our way through the marshes.

My friend worries that she will be of retiring age before progressive policies take hold. Again, I have been there. I've had to learn that hope is not something delivered to you on a platter. It is in working to energize the political process that we find hope and strength. Hope is best understood as a verb, connoting an active desire to fulfil an expectation. We fail, we suffer, but we go on.

The worst mistake is to feel that we are alone. Only a few days ago, the Summit of the Future was held at the United Nations where all countries adopted a Pact for the Future. It

promised to create a safer, more peaceful and sustainable world for future generations. This pact, supported by nations and peoples around the world, is greater than the Make America Great Again movement.

It's true that Trump has mesmerized a big chunk of the American public, but he does not have progressive nations with him, even though he will try to bully them. Trump is a last gasp of a dying culture, not the forerunner of the new age.

Yes, he will dominate Canadian policy in dramatic ways. Our trade with the U.S. may suffer. He will try to turn our government into a sycophantic supporter. He will underscore NATO's false claim that nuclear weapons are the “supreme guarantee” of security. He will dominate Canadian newscasts. It may be a long time until we reach the other side of this dark valley.

I want to tell my young friend that I, too, am suffering. I will not reach the world of my vision. Trump has got in my way. But, like myself, my friend must take heart that our personal participation in developing the human security agenda is the indisputable requirement of our times. Hope is its own reward and hope is how we survive.

Former Senator Douglas Roche's latest book is *Keep Hope Alive: Essays for a War-free World* (Amazon).

The Hill Times

For Ukraine, we need solidarity between Ottawa and Brussels

Europe and Canada must mobilize now to guarantee Ukraine's security and survival. For the moment, we are simply not up to the task—we must prepare for war in the near future.

Katerina Sviderska

Opinion



As Republican Donald Trump clinched victory in the U.S. presidential election on Nov. 5, it is in the trenches to the south and east of Ukraine that his victory is reverberating the most—his possible withdrawal of American military support to Ukraine poses an existential threat to the Eastern European nation's survival in the face of Russian aggression.

Let's stop being naive. European countries and Canada must quickly rethink their approach to security and defence, and take decisive action before January 2025 to fill a potential void at the risk of Ukraine losing its independence and opening the way to Russian expansionism in Europe.

Trump's re-election has brought Europe and Canada face to face with a stark reality: the era of unwavering American support could be coming to an end. Throughout his campaign, the former U.S. president promised to refocus U.S. priorities on domestic issues to the detriment of military and diplomatic commitments abroad. His isolationist doctrine implies a reduction—if not a total halt—in U.S. military aid to Ukraine, and increased pressure on European countries to fund their own defence. By threatening to withdraw the U.S. from NATO, Trump is forcing Europe to envisage a future in which it is alone in the front line against Russian aggression.

For Ukraine, American military aid is not simply an asset, but is an essential pillar of its resistance against the Russia's invasion. Washington supplies the bulk of the weapons that enable

Kyiv to contain the Russian advance, and to protect its territorial integrity. This dependence is a point of vulnerability: for the time being, neither the European Union nor Canada has the financial and military capacity to make up—on their own—for an American withdrawal on this scale. Without Washington, Western support for Ukraine could become insufficient, weakening its ability to defend itself.

If the U.S. were to withdraw, Europe and Canada will have to assume sole responsibility for supporting Ukraine. This prospect has far-reaching consequences for the future of European security, as it raises the question of Europe's strategic autonomy. The situation is forcing Brussels and Ottawa to consider bold measures to ensure that Ukraine can continue to defend itself—because without sufficient support, the stability of Europe and the world is at stake.

Beyond military disengagement, a second Trump presidency could lead Washington to hastily impose a “peace agreement” on Ukraine, with territorial concessions, which would seriously weaken Ukraine's integrity. Such a compromise would primari-

ly benefit Russia, which would see the opportunity as a validation of its imperialist territorial ambitions. Russia's objectives in Ukraine are not limited to territorial gains; they aim to erase Ukrainians' very identity. Russia is seeking to eliminate what defines Ukraine as a sovereign, distinct, and independent country. The risk of escalation is not caused by increased aid to Ukraine, but by Russia's persistence in destroying its neighbour, notably by mobilizing North Korean troops.

Europe and Canada can no longer afford to depend exclusively on America for their security. It is time to develop an autonomous defence policy, and to strengthen their military capabilities to deal with the Russian threat. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is also a reminder of the values for which Western countries are fighting. Beyond military defence, Europe and Canada must renew their commitment to democracy, human rights, and freedom. Russia is already waging war against us in various ways. In the face of authoritarian regimes that seek to weaken these values, it is essential to reject cynicism and complacency.

Paradoxically, this situation could be an opportunity for Europe and Canada to play more central and independent roles on the world stage. By asserting themselves as autonomous security actors and defenders of democratic values, they can redefine their place in the world order. A proactive response would enable Europe to move beyond its historic security dependence on the U.S., and demonstrate that it is capable of guaranteeing regional stability and supporting nations under threat.

Trump's return to power represents a decisive test for our support to Ukraine. Brussels and Ottawa must shoulder their responsibility by stepping up their support. Without a strong response, they will give Russia *carte blanche* to extend its influence, threatening European security, and global stability. Attacking Estonia or Poland means attacking NATO—and, therefore, Canada.

This challenge demands a rapid and concerted response from the Western allies. The carefree days are over. Europe and Canada must mobilize immediately to guarantee Ukraine's security and survival. For the moment, we are simply not up to the task—we must prepare for war in the near future.

Katerina Sviderska is a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge, and a fellow of the chair in Ukrainian Studies at the University of Ottawa.

The Hill Times

THE HILL TIMES | POLICY BRIEFING | NOVEMBER 11, 2024

VETERANS

VETS'

transition to
CIVILIAN LIFE
HAMPERED
by **issues**
ACCESSING
supports

OUR
VETERANS'
STRUGGLE

THE SIMPLE
POPPY:
a reminder of
the **universality**
OF SACRIFICE

MOVING FORWARD
MEANS PROGRESS,
not perfection

VETS' MENTAL
HEALTH, AND THE
service dog
CONNECTION

Vets left
WAITING
FOR ADEQUATE
LIFELONG
PENSIONS

Canada's
MUST-DO
list, **not a**
WISH LIST
for veterans

WOMEN
VETERANS
deserve more
THAN TO BE
'NO LONGER
VISIBLE'

Canada's Veterans
Affairs Minister
Ginette Petitpas
Taylor, *The Hill*
Times photograph
by Andrew Meade



Veterans Policy Briefing

Veterans' transition to civilian life hampered by access to supports, say advocacy groups

The majority of people who leave military service transition to civilian life relatively well but around 1,600 veterans annually struggle, according to the Veterans Transition Network's CEO.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Supports are available to help thousands of Canadian veterans who struggle with adapting to life after service, but administrative barriers and long wait times remain significant obstacles for many, according to the Veterans Transition Network's chief executive officer.

"I think there are a lot of supports available—which is good to see—and it's good to see that there has been ... more services dedicated to this broader issue of transition and the underlying mental health challenges. But, in my mind, the major issue ... is still the issue of accessibility," said Oliver Thorne. "Veterans often struggle to get access to these services. They're there. They're available, but ... the process that they need to navigate, often through Veterans Affairs, limits their ability to engage with those services."

Thorne estimated that about 5,000 people leave military service every year. While the majority of these veterans transition to post-service life with relative success, about 1,500 to 1,600 people annually have difficulties, according to Thorne. Veterans dealing with a physical or mental health injuries as a result of their service are all more likely to struggle in the change, he added.

One of the biggest hurdles facing many veterans as they transition is overcoming complicated application processes, or administrative delays for accessing support services from the federal government, Thorne said. The federal government has taken steps to address these issues, but there's more work to be done, he said.

"I think it's necessary for them to reduce that administrative process that stands between a



Veterans Affairs Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor announced an investment of up to \$11.4-million for veteran-serving groups across Canada on Nov. 4. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

veteran coming on day one, and actually sitting down in some kind of counselling—in some type of specialized service that they need. Less paperwork, less waiting time, and just a greater and more responsive provision of services to veterans who are asking for help," he said.

In 2022, Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) faced a backlog of about 23,000 veterans waiting for disability claims to be processed, as reported in *Global News*.

Since then, the Office of the Veterans Ombud (OVO) found that VAC has made "tremendous progress" in reducing the backlog of disability claim applications, with disability benefit first applications going from being completed at a 61 per cent rate in the first quarter to 73 per cent in the third quarter, according to an annual report released on Aug. 21.

However, wait times for disability benefit decisions continue to be the top complaint received by the OVO, reads the report.

Part of why so many veterans have difficulty adapting to civilian life is because they suddenly find themselves without the structured way of life and the social support network they've become accustomed to after years of military service, according to Thorne. As an example, he said he recently spoke with a veteran who, after a long career in the Canadian Armed Forces, had to make his first doctor's appointment at the age of 58. While he was serving, doctor's appointments were scheduled for him, Thorne explained.

"The service in the military is so much more than a job. It is, for

many people, a cornerstone of their identity. It's where they've derived a significant part of their value system. It is their social support network," he said. "When they leave behind service, they leave behind ... those components of their life as well, and that can be really tough to rebuild."

When asked about how well Veterans Affairs Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, N.B.) is handling her file, Thorne said it would be tough to say because the minister does not represent the entirety of the Veterans Affairs system.

"I found her to be pleasant to deal with. I believe that she genuinely cares about veterans, but of course, it all comes down to what are the changes that occur, and I think that's there's still work to do in that area," he said.

Carolyn Hughes, director of veterans services for the Royal Canadian Legion, told *The Hill Times* that veterans also often face financial struggles during their transition. Finding medical help and a place to live can also be a challenge, she added.

"There's so much unknown. Like, if you have a soldier, sailor, or airman or airwoman that's been serving for 30 years [and] has a mental health condition ... that's going to be a tremendous experience to transition because now you're responsible for finding a family doctor, which we know there's a shortage of in Canada," she said.

Scott Maxwell, chief executive officer of Wounded Warriors Canada, told *The Hill Times* that gaps in supports can form as veterans transition from reliance on the

Department of National Defence (DND) during service to VAC post-service.

"They have to almost start the entire process over again with an entirely separate ministry ... and align benefits and chase after their disability awards, await adjudication for claims, [and] get into a whole new benefit structure. They lose their access to their primary care physician and primary care teams," he said. "It's anything but seamless, and I think what we see ... is that is a significant gap that needs to be addressed."

Maxwell said the federal government must do more to bridge the gap between the DND and VAC, so that veteran benefits are "all lined up" before release.

"When these things aren't set up at the get-go, with respect to disability benefits, awards, and access to care, you've basically left the veteran—in many cases—to try to navigate it on their own. And when you're struggling, and when you're ill and injured ... that's the last thing they should have to be worried about," he said. "We know what they're going to have to deal with ... [so] set up all the mechanisms you possibly can to actually ease that process on their way out."

Sean Bruyey, a former Royal Canadian Air Force intelligence officer and government accountability advocate, told *The Hill Times* that he considers Canada to currently be in a "resource-poor environment for the public service," without enough staff or resources at VAC.

As an example, he cited Ottawa's decision to sign a contract with a private firm for the provision of mental and physical health services for veterans.

In June 2021, the federal government announced a multi-million dollar contract with Partners in Canadian Veterans Rehabilitation Services (PCVRS) to provide rehabilitation services and support for veterans and their families as they transition to life after military service.

"I sacrifice out of obligation to serve my country, and Canada says, 'Yeah, maybe this charity will take care of you,'" said Bruyey. "This is not a reciprocity of services. I'm obligated to die for Canada if I'm ordered to ... but Canada has no obligation whatsoever to do anything for me, and

can hand me off onto for-profit corporations and charities?"

The contract with PCVRS has been criticized by Chris Aylward, national president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), who called the contract "a mistake from the beginning," and said veterans and their families should be served by public service workers and not by private corporations, in a PSAC press release on March 2, 2023.

Then-veterans affairs minister Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, P.E.I.) defended the \$570-million contract, arguing it would ultimately deliver better services to former service members, as reported in *Global News* on Feb. 12, 2023.

When asked about Petitpas Taylor, Bruyey said he considers her an improvement over previous ministers. He argued she has a better understanding than most of what it takes to care for veterans, but budget constraints limit the minister's effectiveness.

"There's a government-wide exercise right now to prepare for future cutbacks, to present planning for how they're going to save money, right down to the section level of all departments," said Bruyey. "Under that environment, there's no way this minister has been given enough lee-way to actually make any meaningful change."

To help support veterans, Petitpas Taylor announced an investment of up to \$11.4-million for veteran-serving organizations across Canada on Nov. 4. This includes \$500,000 to support a project led by Sistema New Brunswick at the 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown, and additional projects will be announced in the coming months, according to a VAC press release.

"When Canadians serve our country, their families serve with them. Sistema New Brunswick inspires thousands of children each year. Through the Veteran and Family Well-being Fund, we're expanding their reach with a new program that will benefit the children of military families and Veterans. Across the country, our government is supporting projects like this one, which make a real difference for veterans and their families," said Petitpas Taylor in the press release.

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The Hill Times

Canada veterans statistics



The Hill Times Photograph by Andrew Meade

- There were 97,625 Canadians serving in the Canadian Armed Forces in the spring of 2021 — as members of the Regular Force or Primary Reserve Force — and 461,240 Canadians counted as veterans.
- In 2021, about one in 20 veterans (5.2 per cent) and currently serving military members living in a private household (5.5 per cent) aged 17 years and older were First Nations, Métis or Inuit.
- Black (2.8 per cent), Chinese (2.5 per cent), South Asian (2.3 per cent), Filipino (1.4 per cent) and Latin American (1.2 per cent) people each accounted for more than one per cent of the currently serving Canadian military personnel in private households in 2021.
- More than four in 10 veterans were seniors aged 65 years and older, while almost one-third were in the core working age group of 25 to 54 years.
- In 2021, nearly one in six veterans (16.2 per cent), or almost 75,000 veterans, were women.

Source: *Canada's Veterans: By the numbers*, released by Statistics Canada on Nov. 10, 2023



The struggles faced by veterans include finding employment after leaving the military, coping with multiple injuries, and mental health issues, writes Liberal MP Emmanuel Dubourg. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Our veterans' struggle

Veterans have made the ultimate sacrifice, fighting for our liberty both here and abroad. Yet, they must fight again to receive support from our country.

Liberal MP
Emmanuel
Dubourg

Opinion



As chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee since 2021, I am deeply moved by the various challenges veterans face daily. They have made the ultimate sacrifice, fighting for our liberty both here and abroad. Yet, they must fight again to receive support from our country.

Their struggles include finding employment after leaving the military, coping with multiple injuries, and facing mental health issues. Many also grapple with homelessness. Additionally, they

seek recognition for their participation in the Afghanistan War and Persian Gulf conflict.

The committee plans to study the obstacles facing Canada's Indigenous and Black people in terms of military participation. We have also dedicated significant time to addressing women veterans' issues. Our report, *Invisible No More. The Experiences of Canadian Women Veterans*, includes 42 recommendations.

Invisible no more

We took precautions during that study due to the emotional pain many witnesses experienced while testifying. Committee members underwent training on how to handle such sensitive situations. We pay tribute to the remarkable courage these women showed in coming forward to testify. We also deeply respect and acknowledge the legitimate choice of those who preferred to remain silent.

The very title of the report, *Invisible No More*, goes to the heart of what our veterans have told us. We believe that the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada are at a turning point in their respective histories. It is essential that these two institutions radically transform the way they treat women who

serve, and those who have served. At stake is their ability to ensure the security of the population, and to guarantee quality care for all veterans who find themselves ill or injured after having honourably defended Canada.

Among its 42 recommendations, the committee calls on the Government of Canada to:

- Implement a robust, structured and long-term research program on military women and veterans, in particular, to address the causes of the alarming proportion of military women who are released for medical reasons;
- Apologize to the women who have served and continue to serve in a culture where sexual trauma has gone unpunished for decades; and
- Provide all military personnel with a copy of their medical records prior to their release date;

Transition from military to civilian life

The study showed that the key difficulties associated with the transition to civilian life are related to the capacity of the provinces and territories to provide health care services in a timely manner, particularly access to a family doctor. These difficulties affect all Canadians, and, therefore, the solution to these problems

cannot be tailored specifically to veterans.

However, veterans should not be disadvantaged by the fact that doctors will refuse to see them because of the additional burden of VAC forms. In order to work within the boundaries of the federal government's jurisdiction, it is important to optimize what services are offered before CAF members become veterans in the months before they are released. The CAF are solely responsible for health care services provided to serving CAF members, which is the primary avenue for federal government involvement in this area.

One of the four recommendations requests "that the Department of National Defence amend the eligibility criteria for the Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP) vocational rehabilitation program to make it available only to veterans whose medical release was not due to service."

National strategy for veterans' employment

The committee's report is divided into four parts. The first provides statistics on the employment status of Canadian veterans by the numbers, using data collected from surveys on life after

military service. The second part provides a summary of employment support programs offered by the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces, and Veterans Affairs Canada. The third part outlines the programs available through the private and community sectors. The fourth part analyzes the key issues identified in the report's previous sections.

Among 30 recommendations, those two are relevant. First, that the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada establish a system that grants veterans control over their medical records and allows them to be shared seamlessly with civilian doctors, Veterans Affairs Canada and service providers at the veterans' discretion; second, that Veterans Affairs Canada has a role in supporting the releasing military members and finding civilian medical professionals and should work closely with the Canadian Armed Forces Transition Group on this matter.

On the special occasion of Nov. 11, I thank VAC public servants for their ongoing effort, and I salute the courage of our veterans, and I thank them for their sacrifice. Let us not forget.

Liberal MP Emmanuel Dubourg (FCPA, EMBA) was first elected to represent the riding of Bourassa, Que., in 2013. He has served as chair of the House Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs since 2021.

The Hill Times

Veterans Policy Briefing

It's time for our veterans' programs and services to reflect a new generation of vets

Today's veterans differ from previous generations, and to honour their service by providing the right supports to meet their needs as they age.

Samir Sinha, John Muscedere & David Pedlar

Opinion



When you think of veterans on Remembrance Day, Nov. 11, what images come to mind? For many Canadians, it might be a visual of the veterans from the two world wars. However, this image does not reflect the vast majority of today's veterans.

Canada has almost half a million veterans, and approximately 66 per cent of them are 55 years of age or older. Only a small frac-

tion are veterans of the Second World War or the Korean War.

Without an updated understanding of who our veterans are and the challenges they face, we cannot fulfill our duty to support their well-being as they age.

A new report, *Addressing the Coming of Age and its Related Complexities Among Canada's Veterans*, highlights that the nature of the military service for today's veterans is vastly different from previous generations of veterans, exposing them to different stressors.

Most of today's veterans served in the military after 1954, engaging in peacekeeping and combat roles overseas—including in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Afghanistan—and provided aid at home during natural disasters and emergencies, including supporting long-term care (LTC) homes early in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Compared to the general population, this country's veterans released between 1998 and 2018 report higher rates of chronic pain, physical activity limitations, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). There is increasing evidence that trauma and PTSD

may worsen health, which could put veterans at risk of developing chronic diseases, and becoming frail.

For veterans who are women, Indigenous, racialized, or members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, experiences of sexual abuse, harassment, or systemic discrimination whilst serving in the military can further contribute to or aggravate future health issues.

These health challenges can make ageing at home more challenging, especially if veterans do not have access to family or friends for support.

While veterans' spouses and partners play a critical role in assisting them with daily living activities, almost a quarter of veterans live alone. This raises concerns not only about social isolation, but also the ability of veterans living by themselves to manage in their own homes as they age.

Recognizing the changing demographics of veterans, we need to ensure that we have the most appropriate programs and services in place to meet their needs as they age.

Veterans Affairs Canada has long provided support to help veterans remain in their own homes

for as long as possible, including providing financial support for housekeeping, meals, grounds maintenance and personal care services. This not only benefits veterans, but it's also less costly than providing care for them in LTC homes.

To keep up with changing needs, it is time to evolve these programs, including adding more mental health supports tailored to older veterans' needs. We also have to ensure that programs and services recognize and respond in a culturally safe way to the needs of marginalized groups of veterans.

It's time to consider alternatives to traditional LTC homes. For example, an innovative program in the United States allows veterans who are no longer able to care for themselves at home to live in another private residence under the care of a trained caregiver. This is a great example of an innovative way to delay or prevent LTC home admissions.

Furthermore, more education of health-care providers can help them recognize and better respond to the unique health challenges veterans experience.

Just as importantly, we need to focus on identifying issues in



Most of today's veterans served in the military after 1954 in peacekeeping and combat roles overseas, and provided aid at home during natural disasters and emergencies, including supporting long-term care homes during the pandemic. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

military service that can accelerate aging and frailty and make changes to prevent or delay these problems from arising.

The insights we gain from new approaches to veterans' care will not only benefit veterans; they can be applied to all Canadians as they age, helping them remain healthy and able to live at home longer.

It is time to appreciate that today's veterans differ from previous generations, and to honour their service by implementing the right supports to meet their needs as they age.

Dr. Samir Sinha is a geriatrician and the director of health policy research at the National Institute on Ageing. Dr. John Muscedere is scientific director of the Canadian Frailty Network. Dr. David Pedlar is scientific director of the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research. The Hill Times

Issues facing veterans: moving forward means progress, not perfection

Mental health is not a one-size-fits-all problem, and veterans need to be able to make their own choices when it comes to their experiences.

Dawn McIlmoyle

Opinion



Veterans today are faced with many challenges. The first

and often most difficult is the transition out of the military.

Depending on the type of release, different challenges are presented. Some retire and are able to seek employment elsewhere in a field similar to their chosen profession or a leadership role, while others are medically released and have their own sets of issues.

The loss of identity, comradeship, and purpose can be quite devastating to a person's mental health. The military builds you up with quotes like "There is no 'I' in team," and "No one left behind," and "I got your six (back)." After being released, you suddenly find yourself very alone, and quite often misunderstood.

People hear the word 'veteran', and they expect an elderly man who fought in the Second World War. In the past, veterans came home from war and were greeted with parades, given land

grants, and treated like heroes. They were looked after; they were treated with honour and respect. Today's veterans have been told they did not go to war; they were in peacekeeping roles, or they were involved in a conflict which is not the same as war and do not deserve the same entitlements. In the last few years, veterans across Canada have been told "They are asking for too much." They have been offered MAID for mental health issues, and they have had to sue to government for proper recognition of significant issues.

In the United States, they meet the veteran where they're at when it comes to mental health. They have federal, state, and local veteran organizations. In Canada, we have Veterans Affairs which is federal, and we have the Legion, which is now mostly run by civilians, and is not the agency it once was.

In Canada, veterans are told what programs they can take, and are not able to seek their own assistance. It must be Health Canada approved or regulated. They have programs they fund, and those are the ones from which veterans must choose. Mental health is not a one-size-fits-all problem. Veterans need to be able to make their own choice when it comes to their experiences, and not have programs forced on them so that they feel like cash cows. There have been more and more agencies popping up to assist veterans with their disability paperwork that charge veterans a portion of their disability. Veterans with mental health struggles are vulnerable and already hurting. To hurt them more because of money is shameful.

Finding a job after release, a purpose for your pain, and the sense of self that was lost when you joined the military usually while balancing a family often leads to divorce, separation, and further impacts a veteran's mental health. Asking for help when you are the helper can be extremely hard, and some veterans no longer wish to burden their families and die by suicide. Veterans with mental health issues are also at risk of being homeless, and if they do have a job, it's usually not for long, setting them up for personal disappointment.

With Remembrance Day upon us, I would like to take this opportunity to share some things that have assisted me with my mental health journey. I have learned to share my experiences in a positive way, and to be grateful for them. I have learned that to "keep moving forward" means progress, not perfection. I have sought out like-minded individuals, and connections in my community. I have got comfortable with being uncomfortable, and am learning to love myself again. I learned it was ok to have feelings, to have emotions, and I learned it was ok to want help for myself, I was not just here to help others. In order for me to help others to the best of my ability, I needed to help myself.

Veterans today have many issues; however, they have a lot to be proud of. It's time to concentrate on the good, and to see them for who they are: The ones who want to and were willing to make a difference.

Dawn McIlmoyle is a veteran, registered nurse, advocate, mother, and grandmother. She enjoys spending time with her service dog, Dutchess Vom Dee. McIlmoyle was named one of the Top 20 Women in Defence for 2024, and was also recently named a Paul Harris Fellow by the Kawartha Rotary Club.

The Hill Times



Veterans Affairs Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor, pictured on the Hill. Veterans advocate Sean Bruyera says pension problems and care for veterans still persist today, and that Veterans Affairs Canada needs effective oversight. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada's must-do list, not a wish-list for veterans

Canadians cannot renege on the contract we understood when we joined the armed forces, that the government would care for and compensate us for our losses in a manner that allows us to live in dignity, fairness, and prosperity.

Sean Bruyera

Opinion



This will be my 25th Remembrance Day advocating for injured serving members, veterans, and their families. Some things have improved, while others remain unchanged. Sadly, we have witnessed a regressive repeat of the sad legacies and past neglect of those in uniform who have sacrificed so much so that we can live our lives of prosperity, dignity, and peace.

Remembrance Day focuses so much on the past that we often forget or—equally harmfully—idealize the living sacrifices in our midst.

This was the case after the First World War. Canada created majestically enduring monuments to the fallen, casting a shadow over destitute and homeless veterans. Our legacy was one of veterans struggling with a parsimonious pension system while less-wounded soldiers had to make do with lump-sum disability payments and a handshake. Charities often took up the slack, but could be whimsical and—in many cases—mean-spirited. The Pension Board could unilaterally remove a veteran's pension for "the man's own good" if the board suspected a psychological injury was the cause of unemployment.

The nuances have changed, but Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) today suffers from overwork with too few employees, too little money, and too much Treasury Board and policy paperwork that hinder frontline workers from making time-sensitive decisions. Meanwhile, charities have become the crutch of VAC policy failures, while passing the hot potato of veteran care to for-profit companies demeans veterans' sacrifices, given to a nation and our system of government, not to a corporation.

Persistent pension application backlogs continue after more than five years, improvements to legislation and programs have taken decades as government

adopts changes piecemeal so as to keep costs down. Many recommendations made by Parliament remain in cobwebs after almost 15 years. Government even makes changes so large as to save billions of dollars at the expense of disabled veterans and their families.

We have forgotten what we did so well after the Second World War. By 1945, a comprehensive plan was in place for more than one million veterans who were given re-establishment benefits as a "right" not discretionary benefits vulnerable to capricious fiscal planning. In 1944, then-prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King told the House of Commons: "Charity is a nauseating thing.... What is to be done will be done as a matter of right."

Any Canadian who joins the military faces the most punitive legal obligations of any profession. False equivalencies with emergency services cannot obscure that no other profession can be ordered into harm's way knowing full well that loss of life may result. Yet, there is not a single legal obligation that Canada's government has towards veterans.

Depending on the military operation, up to 32 per cent of those who served cannot engage in suitable gainful employment, up to 49 per cent suffer a psychological injury, and up to 90 per cent suffer a lifelong, disabling injury. These are horrific war-casualty stats. More needs to be done to honour their sacrifice.

First: Let's start with a duty to inform and even care for all our veterans and their families in accordance with their circumstances. There is one thing all parliamentarians, veterans, and their families can agree upon: programs for veterans and their families are extremely complex and often difficult to access, especially for the more disabled. Let us reciprocate their sacrifices and dedication in uniform with at least this one small obligation. Accessing benefits should not be a journey of an orphaned Oliver Twist pleading "Please, sir, I want some more" from a system often structured to prevent compassion.

Second: VAC needs effective oversight. As the only federal department headquartered outside of Ottawa, the department has benefitted from being isolated from the rest of the public service and the oversight agencies which might otherwise keep a closer eye on more than 40 years of managerial and policy development shenanigans.

Oversight requires independent advisory groups with experts not employed by or beholden to the government. Their proceedings and reports must be made public. We did this in the Second World War with 14 subcommittees ultimately reporting to Canada's most powerful ministers.

The longstanding calls for a legislated Veterans' Ombudsman need action, and the least we can do to hold VAC accountable. The ombudsman should not directly transfer from institutionalized

military life into the procedural quagmire that often manifests in the public service. Objectivity and sympathy become compromised.

Third: Veterans' legislation and policy must be created openly and transparently, not hidden in budget omnibus bills, and convincing Treasury Board to forego consultations on regulations, and bullying opposition to prevent debate in the House of Commons.

Fourth: VAC must implement what Parliament recommends, especially when it comes to improving the well-being of veterans and their families. The most disabled have entered old age and some have even died waiting for compensation for their income losses to bring them to a level consistent with the annual incentives and promotions had they not been kicked out of the military. Parliament recommended this in 2010, the Ombudsman recommended this in 2014, 2017, and 2020, and a host of individuals and groups recommended this since.

This is not a wish-list for an annual policy study, it is a necessity. Canadians cannot renege on the contract we all understood when we joined: Canada would care for us and compensate for our losses in a manner that allows us to live in dignity, fairness, prosperity, and, hopefully, at peace with the nation we lost so much to defend.

Sean Bruyera is an author, retired Air Force intelligence officer, and frequent commentator on government, military, and veterans' issues. Bruyera is the lead plaintiff in a class action against the government for failing to include some of the most disabled veterans in properly advising them about and therefore not receiving the full amount of a retirement lump-sum payable by Veterans Affairs Canada.

The Hill Times

Veterans Policy Briefing

The simple poppy: a reminder of the universality of sacrifice



People place their poppies on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the National War Memorial in Ottawa, on Nov. 11, 2019. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Service is service, the blood of all heroes never dies, and our remembrance of all veterans should be equally enduring regardless of the nature of their wounds.

Fardous Hosseiny

Opinion



In Flanders Fields by the late-Canadian physician lieutenant-colonel John McCrae may be the most widely known poem that honours the lives of those who have served. It continues to be

heard in Remembrance Day services around the world, and is a source of inspiration in countless ways for the duty we, as the living, have to honour the sacrifice of the fallen who gave their lives in war.

There is a lesser-known poem also inspired by this piece that has its own origin story of how the symbol of the poppy came to be an enduring sign of remembrance.

Moina Michael was an American woman so moved hearing this poem that she wrote a response called *We Shall Keep the Faith*, made a personal pledge vowing to wear a red poppy as remembrance. She began producing artificial poppies, and then used the funds raised from this initiative to support ex-servicemen returning from the First World War. Her initiative caught the eye and was promoted by Frenchwoman Anna E. Guerin, adopted by the Royal British Legion in 1921 for the first ever Poppy Appeal that Nov. 11, and then by Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. As a result,

the poppy has been a symbol of remembrance worldwide for more than 100 years. Think about the impact of that as we see the poppy funds today!

The second stanza of her response is particularly beautiful, and in my mind instructive more than a century after she penned it on the back of a used envelope:

*We cherish too, the poppy red
That grows on fields where
valor led*

*It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never
dies,*

As I don my own poppy this year, I think about what a difference one person can make in continuing to honour what can feel at times so very far removed from our present day lives. Be that McCrae, Michael, or Guerin's contribution to how a simple poppy came to be the ongoing symbol of remembrance around the world, or what perhaps we can contribute in modern times individually. Because, truthfully, the reality is it is not that far removed at all if we

ask ourselves a timeless question "in remembrance, who might be the forgotten?"

Here in Canada we know that more than 118,000 brave soldiers did not return home to their loved ones throughout our short history of a nation. Canada's eight Books of Remembrance, which record the names of every Canadian who died in service to our country, are currently displayed at Parliament Hill's Visitor Welcome Centre, in the Room of Remembrance.

Something which we have recently become aware is that not all who have served find themselves remembered in death. For instance, burial sites and grave markers. This may simply be because of a lack of awareness of available programs, perhaps there were many years between their service and time of passing, or even that they hadn't considered themselves a veteran by definition. Some have simply never been identified. It is important that education around this happens so all who have served are recognized with head-

stones honouring their service, including those who historically have served. There is a program through Veterans Affairs and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission that ensures the maintenance of more than 300,000 markers and grave sites of Canadian Armed Forces members here and around the world, including those whose deaths were not directly attributed to services. It is particularly meaningful to know this exists where some might have fallen into disrepair, or where no living relative remain to continue to provide for the upkeep thus ensuring these gravesites are maintained throughout time.

Whether they lie marked in Flanders, Bény-sur-Mer, Beechwood, or unmarked throughout the world, these are heroes, and these are places where valour has led. We must remember all, and their lives and their service must be honoured.

While there is an official count of the war dead, there is growing recognition of a number not accounted for; those lost to their psychological wounds incurred as a result of service. As conversations become more open and honest about mental health, and how this has been a real impact of service, when we lose a former service person—or current serving—to suicide, the question many grapple with now is how do we officially honour those lives? It is welcome to see this year's Memorial Cross Mother (also known as Silver Cross Mother) recognized for her loss of two sons to the impacts of post traumatic stress disorder.

At the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families the feedback we hear from our community is that mental health injuries are no different than the physical injuries which our Veterans incur, and should be treated as such. The impact is equal and they are no less heroes than those who died in uniform. As such it is imperative to honour them in equal measure of remembrance.

As we expand our remembrance practices to include all types of injuries, we have an opportunity to become leaders in advocating for comprehensive recognition of Veterans' sacrifices.

Beyond that, our responsibility as Canadians does not end on Remembrance Day—it extends into everyday acts of awareness, support, and education around the complex realities of military service. There is no differentiation. We can make that statement unequivocally and stand with our veterans and family members in honouring their loved ones on Nov. 11 who died both in service and post service as a result of their injuries sustained.

Perhaps, inspired by the enduring symbol of the poppy and the difference one can make, we can move forward with a renewed understanding: service is service, and the blood of all heroes never dies and our remembrance of all should be equally enduring regardless of the nature of their wounds.

Fardous Hosseiny is president and CEO of the Atlas Institute.
The Hill Times

Veterans, mental health, and the service dog connection

Operation Service Dog has provided over \$2-million to help train and pair over 61 veterans with service dogs, with 27 more on the way.

Nujma Bond

Opinion



Standard poodle Caliber, left, is a service dog paired with retired CAF veteran Kenda Doody, centre. German shepherd service dog Cora, right, is paired with retired RCMP veteran Ed Brake. Photos courtesy of Fire Team K9 Service Dogs

The Royal Canadian Legion has long been advocating for government-led national training standards for service dogs—amazing animals that provide a lifeline for Canadian Armed Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police veterans living with operational stress injuries such as post-traumatic stress disorder, or physical injury.

Canada still doesn't have any such standards. Why does it matter? It's summarized in the words of one retired RCMP veteran, Ed Brake. A former staff sergeant and head of the RCMP's police motorcycle unit in Ottawa, Brake has lived with a German shepherd service dog named Cora for about two years. Cora was trained through a program recognized by Wounded Warriors Canada (WWC).

"I've already seen the benefits of having a true certified service dog," he explains. Not only because of the support they provide, but also "because there's a ton of fakes, and it makes a difference." He also says legitimate dogs are regularly questioned—and it can be an uncomfortable experience.

It's not that there has been an overt lack of willingness to develop national guidelines in Canada. The federal government took on this task and was close to getting there as far back as 2018, but the effort ended rather abruptly and has seemingly been abandoned. The reason? The legion learned it was too difficult to reach a consensus among affected parties, including well-meaning yet disparate groups that run training programs.

If fulsome national consultations have occurred, surely an

expert panel can be convened, a plan developed, and standards put in place in relatively short order. Not everyone will agree, but common sense must prevail. Canada already has national standards and regulations for many things that affect health and well-being.

Upholding standards and providing related ID-cards would make it much easier for the general public to recognize a certified service animal. It would assist airlines, eating establishments, workplaces, and others. It could also help make it possible for organizations including the legion—and possibly Veterans Affairs Canada—to direct funding to veterans for the costly feeding and caring of dogs; knowing the animals and their owners have accredited training, and the dogs are considered an official treatment element.

Currently, the legion's Ontario Command leads a program called Operation Service Dog, and through its collaboration with WWC, has provided over \$2-million to help train and pair over 61 veterans with service dogs, with 27 more on the way. The legion's Quebec Command is set to begin a similar relationship. Because WWC developed a set of standards, they could potentially be applied across the country today—pending modifications that might be needed. The framework exists and has been tested.

Caliber—fondly known as Cali—is a standard poodle, a service dog paired with now-retired CAF veteran Kenda Doody two years ago after a suggestion from a health-care provider. They became a "team" last November. A former combat veteran, Doody

describes the relationship this way: "[Cali] has been making me 'soft' again," she says, having become 'hard,' unapproachable, angry, and isolated after living through traumatic experiences while serving in the forces.

These animals can provide reassurance, reduce anxiety, and make a more "normal" life possible—literally taking some veterans from their basements back into society. Our country needs to take action to make it easier for our veterans to receive and maintain a qualified service dog as part of their treatment plan. Here's a three-step plan to consider:

- Create national standards for service dogs for veterans (and for the wider public in tandem while we're at it), recognizing dogs as a regulated option in the treatment mix for veterans;

- Provide financial support to help veterans maintain the health of their dogs where required, through a simple easy to follow process; and

- Implement new regulations swiftly having received agreement on any required synergies with all provinces and territories.

In the words of RCMP veteran Brake: "My life has been changed since I received Cora." And from CAF veteran Doody about Cali: "I have to take care of her because she takes care of me ... she's like my child, but with fur." Enough said.

The Royal Canadian Legion asks for tangible action—not in two years, five years, 10 years, or after countless new reports. With willingness and a concerted collective effort, including by the Legion, this could happen pretty quickly. Let's just get it done.

Nujma Bond is a national spokesperson for the Royal Canadian Legion. She holds a BSc, BJ, and in a previous role oversaw communications for the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

The Hill Times

Ensuring equity: veterans who are women deserve more than to be 'no longer invisible'

Women are veterans with their own unique experiences, needs, and voices. Instead of gender-blindness, we need to update military/RCMP and veteran policies to remove existing legacy biases.

Maya Eichler, Karen Breeck & Sayward Montague

Opinion



Amy Meunier, assistant deputy minister of the commemoration and public affairs branch of the Department of Veterans Affairs, spoke to the House Veterans Affairs Committee on Dec. 7, 2023, during a meeting to discuss the experiences of women veterans. Par/Vu screencapture

This week marks the first Remembrance Day since the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs published its report *Invisible No More. The Experiences of*

Canadian Women Veterans. Released on June 12, 2024, this report is the result of both the longest and only study dedicated to women in the committee's history.

Its 42 recommendations call for concrete actions from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), the Department of National Defence/Canadian Armed Forces, and the

RCMP. This was the first concerted effort by government to acknowledge and address the specific needs of military/RCMP veteran women.

Even though women have participated in all of Canada's wars, they have rarely been treated as equal veterans—neither by VAC, no society, or their male peers. Historically, women were excluded from all combat positions, and were primarily recruited into military support roles. This firmly tied soldiering to men and masculinity. Veteran commemoration and benefits were thus largely built on the presumed norm that veterans are men.

The 1970 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada created pressure to end sex and gender discrimination, including in the

Veterans Policy Briefing

Broken promises: veterans left waiting for adequate lifelong pensions

Veterans Affairs must adopt a 'one veteran-one standard' approach to improve legislation to address the financial and wellness requirements of the veterans' community, particularly concerning pensions for life.

Brian Forbes

Opinion



It's unacceptable that we continue to have veterans' legislation in Canada that provides a much higher level of compensation to a veteran injured before 2006 compared to a veteran injured after that date, writes Brian Forbes. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

standard" approach to improve veterans legislation so as to address the financial and wellness requirements of Canada's veterans' community. This is particularly so with respect to the pension for life provisions formally implemented in April 2019.

In our considered opinion, this pension for life policy fails to satisfy the prime minister's initial commitment in 2015, in response to the *Equitas* lawsuit, to address the inadequacies and deficiencies in the New Veterans Charter/Veterans Wellbeing Act (NVC/VWA), and continues to ignore the elephant in the room that has overshadowed this entire discussion.

As stated in our many submissions to VAC and Parliament, the government has not met veterans' expectations with regard to the fundamental mandated commitment to "reestablish lifelong pensions" under the Charter to ensure that a comparable level of financial security is provided to all disabled veterans and their families over their life course, regardless of where or when they were injured. This financial disparity between the Pension Act and NVC/VWA compensation was validated by the Parliamentary Budget Office's report in February 2019, which underlined this longstanding discrimination.

It is unacceptable that we continue to have veterans' legislation in Canada that provides a significantly higher level of compensation to a veteran injured before 2006—the date of enactment of the New Veterans Charter—when compared to a veteran injured post-2006. If applied to the Afghanistan conflict, this discrimination results in veterans of the same war having totally different pension benefits.

It has been NCVA's consistent recommendation to the minister and to the department that VAC should adopt the major conclusions of the ministerial policy advisory group (MPAG) report presented to the national stakeholder summit in Ottawa in October 2016—and to various ministers since—together with the recommendations contained in the NCVA legislative programs.

Both of these reports proposed combining the best provisions of the Pension Act and of the NVC/VWA, resulting in a comprehensive pension compensation and wellness model that would treat all veterans with parallel disabilities in the same manner, and eliminate the artificial cutoff dates that arbitrarily distinguish veterans based on whether they were injured before or after 2006.

This is not a question of choosing between wellness and financial compensation, but rather blending the overall veterans legislative schemes to harmonize the impact of the reestablishment

programs for medically released veterans and their families.

NCVA takes the position that financial security remains a fundamental necessity to successfully adopting any wellness or rehabilitation strategy. To achieve this, we have continually encouraged VAC to prioritize the major recommendations of the MPAG as fundamental building blocks to establish the initial components of our proposed model.

This would involve the enhancement of the Income Replacement Benefit as a single stream of income for life based on a progressive future loss of income concept, to correspond with what the disabled veteran would have earned in their military career if they had not been injured. This would also involve the addition of Exceptional Incapacity Allowance, the establishment of a new caregivers allowance and a new monthly family benefit for life in accordance with the Pension Act.

The NCVA and veterans at large will be closely scrutinizing the election platforms of all federal leaders to determine which party will commit to addressing the shortfalls and inequities that still exist in veterans legislation. There are hundreds of thousands of veterans in Canada today and, when family, friends and supporters are considered, this number of potential voters is not without significance.

After years of broken promises, it is essential that the government and opposition parties seize the moment to satisfy the financial needs of Canadian veterans and their dependants. In so doing, Parliament would finally be recognizing that the long-standing social covenant between the Canadian people and the veterans' community demands nothing less.

Brian Forbes is chair of the National Council of Veteran Associations in Canada, and chair of the Executive Committee of The War Amps.

The Hill Times

Ensuring equity: veterans who are women deserve more than to be 'no longer invisible'

Continued from page 21

military. As a result, military colleges were forced to admit women, and married or pregnant women were no longer excluded from joining or staying in the military. Almost 20 years later, in 1989, a Human Rights Tribunal Decision forced the military to lift the combat ban on women.

Despite these legal changes, the government of the day chose not to set aside the necessary resources to create favourable conditions for women to serve. Accommodations, equipment,

uniforms, and benefits were not formally updated. Female-specific occupational and environmental medical care research, policy, standards, and training were not put in place.

Instead, in the 1990s, the Canadian military was encouraged to adopt a gender-neutral, or—more accurately—a gender-blind approach that assumed "a soldier is a soldier." Later, VAC and male-dominated veteran service organizations adopted the language of "one veteran, one standard," even if this existing standard would better serve men than women.

Government assertions of equality and sameness made military women's experiences and needs invisible—whether experiences related to the military's gendered culture, or sex-specific needs related to pregnancy, postpartum, or menopause.

Women veterans have fought—and continue to fight—hard to change inequities in military and veteran policies. This Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) study continued this trend, spurring a new wave of women veteran advocacy and mobilization. More than 60 women veterans came forward to testify

at the committee, or to submit a brief.

The testimonies by military and RCMP veteran women exposed past and present sex- and gender-based discrimination and violence. They challenged existing military/RCMP and veteran policies, as well as parliamentary business as usual. Many of those testifying called out the lack of trauma-informed witness-centric practices. They also called out the tendency among some MPs to politicize and politically exploit women veterans and their issues.

Women veterans are veterans—not lesser veterans. And yet, they are not the same as veteran men.

Women are veterans with their own unique experiences, needs, and voices. Instead of gender-blindness, we need to update military/RCMP and veteran policies to remove existing legacy biases that continue to cause preventable harm, and inequitable health and well-being outcomes for some servicewomen when

compared to veteran men and civilian women.

And to do that, we need a comprehensive national servicewoman and woman veteran research strategy, as recommended by the committee.

Swift government implementation of the women veteran ACVA report is a means to this end. It is up to our self-proclaimed "feminist" government to ensure the promise of Parliamentarians is realized.

Women veterans deserve more than being "no longer invisible." They deserve equitable supports, benefits, and participation in Canada's key institutions.

This Remembrance Day, let's ensure once and for all that women veterans are recognized as veterans in their own right.

And yes ... those medals are their own.

Maya Eichler, Karen Breeck, and Sayward Montague are co-chairs of the Women Veterans Research and Engagement Network.

The Hill Times

Lobbying watchdog plans to reduce '20 per cent rule' if her term is renewed

Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger plans to update some rules if her seven-year term is renewed, but industry observers question the timing and efficacy of her proposed updates.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Implementing a stricter registration requirement for lobbyists and pushing for a long-overdue review of the Lobbying Act are among the priorities for Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger, who will find out if she's to be reappointed for another seven-year term before the end of this year.

"A lot of lobbying is occurring right now that is not required to be in the registry," said Bélanger in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "Right now, the threshold is 30 hours of communications that can be technically done without transparency, and that, right now, is legal, and that shouldn't be. We need to reduce the threshold so that there is more transparency about the communication."

On Nov. 5, House Ethics Committee members unanimously agreed to report to the House that they support Bélanger continuing in her current role, which she has held since 2017. A decision from the House on Bélanger's reap-



Government Relations Institute of Canada president Hunter Doubt says stricter reporting requirements proposed by the lobbying commissioner reducing the 20 per cent rule would add more complexity to communication reports, and 'I'm not sure how much that's ultimately going to add to transparency.'

Photograph courtesy of Hunter Doubt



pointment will need to be issued before her current term expires on Dec. 30.

Bélanger told the committee that, if reappointed, she has plans for her office to issue "interpretation bulletins" intended to amend the time-threshold that triggers registration for lobbying done by staff on behalf of their employer. These bulletins, issued by the lobbying commissioner, are intended to guide lobbyists in terms of interpretation or enforcement of the Lobbying Act.

Under the Lobbying Act currently, the "significant part of duties" threshold—also known as the 20 per cent rule—states that businesses and groups may forgo registering if the lobbying activities of in-house lobbyists do not comprise 20 per cent or more of the duties of a single, full-time employee.

Estimates provided by Bélanger at previous committee meetings and on the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying (OCL) website have put "20 per cent" of one employee's time over a four-week period as representing a registration threshold of between 30 to 32 hours spent lobbying, based on a 40-hour work week.

"I do plan on giving new meaning to significant part of duties and to reduce that threshold. If I am reappointed, head's up: It's coming down. It will not be 32 hours anymore. That's the first thing," she told the committee.

Bélanger has been critical of the 20 per cent rule in previous committee appearances, and also called for the rule's removal in a list of 11 recommendations for changes intended to strengthen

the Lobbying Act, which were released in February 2021.

Bélanger told the committee that another priority would be to issue a change to the monthly communication reports requirements.

Under the current rules, oral communications with designated public-office holders only need to be reported if they were arranged in advance, and initiated by the lobbyist.

Bélanger argued that neither of those factors should be considered when it comes to reporting.

"Why does it matter if it was arranged in advance? It's the content of the conversation that matters, and who arranged it is irrelevant as well. Whether you meet them at the corner of the street, or in your office, by chance, or because it was planned, that needs to be in the registry," she told the committee.

Bélanger also emphasized the importance of finally moving forward with a review of the Lobbying Act. The act was last reviewed in 2012, and no rules were changed. Deadlines for conducting subsequent reviews came and went in 2017, and again in 2022.

A review of the Lobbying Act can be initiated through an order of reference to do so from the House of Commons, or as a result of a motion from a member of the House Ethics Committee.

Hunter Doubt, president of the Government Relations Institute of Canada (GRIC) and also Expedia Group's manager of government and corporate affairs, told *The Hill Times* that when a review of the act finally happens, his organization will want to ensure the balance between transparency

and the rights of lobbyists. When asked for an example of a possible issue related to that balance, he mentioned Bélanger's desire to expand reporting requirements.

"It sounds like the commissioner is looking for anything and everything to be included in communications reports, even if a lobbyist just happens to run into someone on the street," said Doubt. "That's going to add a lot more compliance and complexity, I think, to things like communications reports, and I'm not sure how much that's ultimately going to add to transparency — if you just happen to run into someone by accident and speak with an MP."

Doubt said he will also be interested in any new guidance from the OCL related to the 20-per-cent rule.

"We suspect that's something that will also be looked at even further during the review of the act, as she's made it quite clear she kind of sees registration by default as a necessary next step," he said. "I think I'd be interested to hear from our membership on what they think of that."

In regard to Bélanger's first term as lobbying commissioner, Doubt told *The Hill Times* that she has showed openness to input from GRIC members, and has always been "upfront about her intentions."

"It certainly doesn't mean we've always agreed on everything, and I suspect that will not change, but I think there's a mutual respect between both sides, and we're always mindful of the independency of the commissioner's position," said Doubt. "Overall, I certainly think it's helpful—if she

is to continue—that we already have a good working relationship with her and her office, and a good rapport with her."

Duff Conacher, co-founder of Democracy Watch, told *The Hill Times* that House Ethics Committee members were "incredibly negligent" at the meeting in reviewing Bélanger's record as lobbying commissioner. During the meeting, Conservative MP Michael Barrett (Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Ont.), his party's ethics critic, asked about investigations initiated by the OCL into compliance with the Lobbying Act. Bélanger confirmed she has referred 16 investigation files to the RCMP during her time in office, of which four are currently with the RCMP.

Conacher said committee members should have asked questions about the 12 remaining investigations not currently with the RCMP.

"Was anyone prosecuted? Anyone found guilty of violating the act? Anyone found guilty of violating the [Lobbyists' Code of Conduct]?" said Conacher.

When the lobbying commissioner refers a file to the RCMP, and the referral does not result in a charge or a conviction, the watchdog may then decide to cease the investigation, or continue to investigate and report to Parliament, according to the OCL annual report for 2022/2023. In that report, Bélanger confirmed that, following a decision by the RCMP not to pursue six referrals, she had ceased five of those investigations because "there was no compliance rationale to continue them due to changes in circumstances and the amount of time passed since the underlying events took place."

In regard to Bélanger's intention to amend the 20-per-cent rule, Conacher questioned why she would do that after being in her role for seven years.

"Everyone's known that's a giant loophole, and suddenly now she's going to reinterpret it? Again, it's a negligently weak enforcement record. If she thought there was a problem with the interpretation bulletin, why did she not do something in the last seven years?" said Conacher.

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Democracy Watch co-founder Duff Conacher says House Ethics Committee members were 'incredibly negligent' in reviewing the lobbying commissioner's record. Photograph courtesy of Duff Conacher

News

‘A lot of work that has to be done’: how the government has been preparing for Trump 2.0

As the Trudeau government faces its second Trump presidency down south, cabinet ministers in Ottawa stick to a message of preparation and relationship-building.

Continued from page 1

Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) said on the same day that he “was already texting folks in the United States, and they’re responding. So this is good. You know, what we’ve said to Canadians is that we would be ready, and that we would fight for Canadian interests.”

“We were there last time. Many of us served during the former Trump administration. But I think now we’ve moved from just being the friendly neighbour of the north to a strategic partner, and they understand that.”

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.), who was the foreign affairs minister between 2017 and 2019, said the government was building new relationships on top of those it already cultivated during Trump’s first term.

“The fact is Canada is different from the rest of the world when it comes to the U.S. We are the single biggest export market for the U.S.—bigger than China, Japan and the U.K. combined,” she said. “That means that gives us leverage, that gives us some real power in that relationship. It is also the case that our relationship with the United States is uniquely mutually beneficial. We build things together, and Canadian workers do not undercut U.S. workers.”

Freeland said she spoke several times on Nov. 5 with Robert Lighthizer, Trump’s former United States trade representative who prosecuted tariff policies, and who has been touted as a potential U.S. Treasury secretary in 2025.

The point people

Back in January, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) announced plans for a “Team Canada” approach to the American election, to be led by Champagne, International Trade Minister Mary Ng (Markham—Thornhill, Ont.), and Canada’s

Ambassador to the United States Kirsten Hillman.

As previously reported in *The Hill Times*, Prime Minister’s Office chief of staff Brian Clow has developed a close link with Hillman, and previously served in the office’s U.S. relations war room during Trump’s first term. Patrick Travers, senior global affairs adviser, is called on within the office for his insights.

Michael Wernick, former clerk of the Privy Council and current Jarislowsky Chair in Public Sector Management at the University of Ottawa, told *The Hill Times* in an email on Nov. 4 that the work within the Canadian government would have started months ago and intensified in March when the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates firmed up after the party primaries.

However, those plans would have been “jolted” when U.S. President Joe Biden was replaced at the top of the Democratic ticket with Harris over the summer. Wernick noted that the current clerk, John Hannaford, has a history in the foreign policy community, and so may take a different approach than his predecessors. Meanwhile, Foreign Affairs Deputy Minister David Morrison has past experience as a G7 sherpa, and has extensive experience in relations with the U.S. and the rest of the Americas.

“It is less about predicting who will win than mapping out the scenarios that would follow either side winning and who controls Congress,” Wernick wrote. “Most of the work would have been led by Global Affairs, tapping into the embassy in Washington and the consulates across the U.S. The embassy is the main source for tracking and gathering input from American experts and stakeholders.”

Prep work

Boehm, who previously worked both in Canada’s embassy in Washington and with Global Affairs in Ottawa, said the diplomatic post in the U.S. capital is constantly feeding analysis it receives from contacts in Congress, think tanks, and senior bureaucrats.

Trudeau followed up that approach on Nov. 7 by reviving the “Critical Canada-U.S. Issues” cabinet committee. Chaired by Freeland, the committee will also consist of Joly, Champagne, Ng, Transport Minister Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.), Defence Minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.), Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay

(Cardigan, P.E.I.), Immigration Minister Marc Miller (Ville-Marie-Le Sud-Ouest-Île-des-Soeurs, Que.), Emergency Preparedness Minister Harjit Sajjan (Vancouver South, B.C.), and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.).

“There’s always that level of contact and analysis in terms of feeding back to Ottawa—who’s who is up, who’s down, who might move into something, what sort of speculation are people hearing,” he said.

That work is complemented by Canada’s network of consulates general in cities such as Atlanta, Ga.; Boston, Mass.; Chicago, Ill.; Detroit, Mich.; and Seattle, Wash. Progressive Senator Peter Harder (Ontario), a former foreign affairs deputy minister, told *The Hill Times* that it was important to look beyond the presidential election to important U.S. House and Senate races, plus gubernatorial campaigns.

Trump’s Republican colleagues are poised to retake the U.S. Senate from the Democrats after four years. At the time of publication, it remained unclear whether the party would hold onto its majority in the House of Representatives.

There was no party change in the 11 state gubernatorial races held on the same day, though new governors were elected in Delaware, Indiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Washington, and West Virginia. In Michigan, the state’s lower house flipped from Democratic control to Republican.

“There would be broad tracking of those races, but also contingency planning with respect to what changes might mean in terms of key committee chairs that are important for Canada,” Harder said.

That could include seeking out the views on issues such as pending renewal of the Canada-United States-Mexico agreement in mid-2025, and the strength of Canada’s presence in committee chairs’ constituencies, Harder said. As an example, Harder noted that, during then-U.S. senator Tom Daschle’s tenure as Democratic Senate majority leader, “he was a very difficult personality on farm issues. That mattered in terms of the bilateral relationship because he had power.”

“There would also be broader foreign policy considerations, so it’s not just the bilateral economic relationship as we seek to gain in this common economic space in North America, but what

about the foreign policy issues of the day, and how Canada can express its interest and align itself where it can, and articulate differences where it must,” he said.

Global Affairs’ work would be supplemented by task teams and working groups established by the Privy Council Office, Wernick said, while Finance Canada would probably have been tasked with developing economic modelling on Trump’s campaign promises, such as a minimum 10 per cent tariff on all imports.

Where to from here?

Trump’s radical agenda—from the tariffs to proposed mass deportations, and foreign policy in Ukraine and the Middle East—would have mobilized the wider Canadian civil service to a level akin to that in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Boehm said.

“There was a need to bring together all branches and agencies of government on a regular basis to deal with the crisis,” he said. “Now that was terrorism, this is not, but in terms of Canada’s national interests, obviously there’s a lot of work that has to be done.”

Outside the federal government apparatus, Canada will also rely on the expertise of businesses, trade associations, cross-border interest groups, and provincial governments for both information and influence. Parliamentary groups—such as the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group of which Boehm is a member—will also be critical.

Boehm said he expects congressional delegates and influencers within the forthcoming administration will attend the Halifax International Security Forum from Nov. 22-24. “In many cases, these are contacts and friendships that have developed over time,” he said.

Harder said Canadian officials would await the makeup of the Trump transition team ahead of his Jan. 20, 2025, inauguration. In the meantime, new leadership positions in the U.S. Congress will become apparent more quickly.

“It’s not that you have to wait for [Jan.] 20th. The new senators will be in place in early January, and the power changes there will be felt immediately,” he said. “But it’ll also be getting to know the people around not just the transition, but potential secretaries as they are identified and almost doing a mapping of key relationships.”

Wernick said Trudeau’s PMO—as it did in 2016—knows Democrats better than Republicans, but would try to connect with Trump’s camp, “although it will be harder to figure out who is a Trump influencer this time.” He noted that Trudeau’s chief of staff Katie Telford and then-principal secretary Gerald Butts met several times with Trump’s team during the transition period following the 2016 U.S. election.

With Republican control of the U.S. Senate, Boehm anticipated Trump’s cabinet, ambassadors, and senior department heads to be confirmed relatively quickly. Provided Canadian officials act quickly and do their research, that should not be a problem, he said, though the expected swiftness creates an earlier deadline.

“Last time it took a very long time, and it wasn’t clear who was going to go where, and I think it was partially because Trump and his people were new to government, and they didn’t know,” he said. “This time around, they’re not new, he will have had the experience of having been president for four years, and will know how to pick his people and get them through.”

Crossing the border

Beyond cross-border talks, Canada must prepare to play host to Trump at least once in the new year.

Canada will host the G7 summit in Kananaskis, Alta., next June, where the country will assume the group’s presidency. The North American Leaders Summit is also due to be hosted by Canada next year, though it is unclear whether it will proceed—no such summit took place during Trump’s administration.

Harder said finding the U.S. leads on the G7 summit and developing an agenda in a timely way could prove challenging.

“For example, who’s going to be the sherpa, who is the personality responsible for coordinating with the Canadian lead sherpa and other sherpas of the G7?” he said. “[What about] the agenda, not just for the heads of government meeting, but in preparation for that, there’s always a set of ministerial topical meetings and civil society engagements. So it’s going to be hugely complex and challenging, because the pace of appointments may not be at the pace that makes this easy.”

In the meantime, Biden remains president for the next two months, and discussions on foreign policy will continue. It remains to be seen whether a farewell visit from his administration will be arranged, just as then-vice-president Biden visited Ottawa in the final days of the Obama administration.

“I don’t know to what extent, where, or whether there will be any such gesture to the outgoing administration, we do have a few months in which the Biden administration will continue to be the formal and appropriate point of contact,” Harder said.

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‘The people are never wrong’: Canadian politicians mark ‘decisive’ Trump victory

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland is seeking to ease the anxiety of some Canadians following the election results: ‘Canada will be absolutely fine.’

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN & IAN CAMPBELL

Canadian politicians were quick to acknowledge Donald Trump’s “decisive victory” and congratulate the former U.S. president for winning a second term in the White House in statements and scrums on Nov. 6.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau Que.) congratulated Trump, and said he looked forward to working with the president-elect once again.

“The world is actually even more difficult and more complicated than it was four years ago, and I know there is lots of work for us to do,” Trudeau told reporters in a morning scrum following what he called “a decisive victory” for the Republican candidate.

“On our side we’ve been preparing for this. We’re looking forward to doing this work, and we’re going to make sure that this extraordinary friendship and alliance between Canada and the United States continues to the benefit of Canadians, but also people around the world.”

In a statement posted to X, Trudeau called the bilateral relationship “the envy of the world.”



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) posted his congratulations on X on Nov. 6, and used the election results to

warn against Trudeau’s policies with Trump as president.

“Yesterday’s result confirms we must cancel Trudeau’s plan to quadruple the carbon tax and hike other taxes, which would push hundreds of thousands more jobs south where President Trump will be cutting taxes even further,” Poilievre said.

In a scrum that same day, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) addressed Canadians who



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks with reporters on Nov. 6, addressing the results of the U.S. presidential election and Donald Trump’s victory. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

are anxious about the prospect of a Trump presidency.

“Canada will be absolutely fine,” she said, adding the country has a “strong relationship” with the U.S. and Trump’s team.

“Let’s remember that our trading relationship today is governed by the trade deal concluded by President Trump himself and his team. That’s really, really important.”

She also appeared to directly address Trump’s team and concerns that the America-first approach could shift relations.

“Our partnership is good for American workers. Canadian workers have high labour standards, high environmental standards. Our partnership in no way undercuts American workers. I know that is at the heart of the concerns of President Trump and his team because that is at the heart of our new NAFTA deal that we concluded with them.”

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) also addressed Canadians who are concerned with the outcome, and said “now is the time” to “defend Canadian interests.”

“I think a lot of folks woke up today and woke up really worried, really afraid, felt crushed,” he said before his party’s caucus meeting. “It looks like Trump’s election is going to have serious impacts on Canadians. So we need to come together—all parties, all leaders—and put Canadian interests first. We have to protect Canadian jobs. We have to be prepared for the impacts of potential tariffs and what that would mean for our economy, for manufacturing.”



NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh

A statement from Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil-Chambly, Que.) noted it is customary to offer optimistic congratulations following an election, and—in French—acknowledged Trump read



Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet

the hearts of many Americans to win them over.

Tourism Minister Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Que.) said “it’s too early to talk about lessons” following the Democrats’ loss of the White House.

“I think we have a campaign to do in Canada, which is not the same campaign” as the United States, she said. “What I would just say is that campaigns are important and we’re going to make sure that we are ready for the next campaign here in Canada.”

Speaking in French, she answered reporters’ questions about Poilievre and Trump, saying she does not make those comparisons, and instead pointed to the Conservative Party leader’s policies as an area of concern. She brought up abortion access in Canada, suggesting that is an area of concern for women voters.

National Defence Minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.) addressed the anticipated pressure Canada will face from Trump to meet NATO’s two per cent of GDP defence spending target. Canada promised earlier this year to up its defence spending to reach the target by 2032-33.

“We’ve made a commitment to do that. We’ve got a plan, and we’re working hard towards it,” Blair said.

When asked if he had a message for Trump, Blair said he did not, and reiterated cabinet messages about looking forward to working with the new U.S. government after Americans voted in a new administration.

“The people are never wrong,” he said.

Treasury Board President and Transport Minister Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.) stressed the bilateral trade and economic ties, including the \$3.3-billion of goods and services crossing daily through the “longest undefended border in the world.”

“Regardless of who is in the White House, our government will always work extremely hard to ensure that that economic relationship remains sound,” Anand said.

On transportation, Anand said she will “work closely” with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg “as long as he is in that position,” and take the same approach with his successor once president-elect Trump moves forward and appoints his new set of cabinet secretaries.

“We’ll work very hard to ensure that we have seamless transportation networks and systems between our two countries. It’s of the utmost importance for the Canadian population—which is who we are serving—to ensure.”

In a statement posted on X, Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.) pointed to Canada and the U.S. as “deeply connected through our economies and our people.”

“Together, we’ll focus on investment, growth, and global peace and security,” she said.

Canada’s Ambassador to the U.S. Kirsten Hillman said on X she is “looking forward to working together towards a more prosperous and secure future.”



Ontario Premier Doug Ford

the United States, “built on strong economic ties, shared values, national security interests and integrated supply chains.”

“Millions of workers on both sides of the border are counting on our governments to maintain and build our economic partnership, pursuing shared opportunities in manufacturing, energy and critical mineral development,” wrote Ford.

He also offered congratulations to other elected officials at all levels of government, including state governors, noting that “Ontario is the No. 1 export destination for 17 U.S. states and the No. 2 export destination for another 11.”

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith spoke of “reinforcing” her province’s ties with the U.S., and a trading partnership she said has “strengthened both economies and improved quality of life in both jurisdictions.”



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith

“Alberta is a critical part of North American energy security as the single largest supplier of crude oil and natural gas to the United States—providing twice as much as Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq combined,” she said on X.

British Columbia Premier David Eby also spoke of close ties with his province.

“British Columbians are close neighbours with family, relationships, and businesses on both sides. Looking forward to working collaboratively on our shared priorities,” he wrote on X.



B.C. Premier David Eby



Quebec Premier François Legault

Quebec Premier François Legault struck a cautionary note in a Quebec City press conference, where he raised concerns about the

potential for increasing numbers of migrants entering the province following Trump’s victory. The president-elect has promised mass deportations of undocumented immigrants. Legault told reporters, per the Canadian Press, that Canada must ensure its borders are well protected.

“My concern is the economic interests of Quebec,” posted Legault on X. “We must be strategic in key sectors where Quebec has a lot of exports to the United States: forestry, agriculture, aluminum, and aeronautics.”

Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew said his province’s friendship with the United States has “stood the test of time,” and “America will always be Manitoba’s most-important trading partner and ally.”

“My priorities are Manitoba workers and a strong Manitoba economy,” Kinew posted on X. “We’re going to keep working together to strengthen national, economic, and border security with our investments in trade, critical minerals, energy, and agriculture.”

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News

Trudeau advises Liberal caucus to be 'very careful' commenting on Trump's election as president

Branding Pierre Poilievre as 'Canada's Trump' is unlikely to be effective, as Canadians can easily distinguish between the two leaders, says Darrell Bricker. Meanwhile, pundit Scott Reid urges every Liberal to read Kyla Ronellenfitch's piece: 'So goddamned smart.'



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told his 152-member Liberal caucus last week to exercise caution when they comment on Donald Trump's election as president, or it could negatively affect the bilateral relationship. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Continued from page 1

reaction to Trudeau's concluding press conference remarks regarding a sunset clause in the NAFTA renegotiations. In a second tweet, Trump said that he had instructed his officials to withdraw from the summit's official communiqué.

"PM Justin Trudeau of Canada acted so meek and mild during our @G7 meetings only to give a news conference after I left saying that, 'US Tariffs were kind of insulting' and he 'will not be pushed around.' Very dishonest & weak. Our Tariffs are in response to his of 270% on dairy!" Trump said in his tweet.

In addition to a strong relationship in defence and security, Canada and the United States trade hundreds of billions of dollars in goods and services each year. According to a July report from the Congressional Research Service, Canada exported 78 per cent of its goods to the U.S. in 2023.

The report also noted that, as of 2022, the U.S. was "the largest source of foreign direct investment by stock in Canada (\$438.8 billion), and Canada was the fourth-largest FDI source in the United States (\$589.3 billion)." Trump, known for his protectionist stance, renegotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement during his first term, now known in Canada as CUSMA. The agreement is up for renewal in 2026, and any significant changes could affect thousands of jobs in both countries.

Trump won his second term as president on Nov. 5 with 295 electoral college votes and 71.8 million votes. The Democratic candidate Kamala Harris, the current vice-president, received 226 electoral college votes and 67 million votes. The threshold to

win the presidential election was 270 electoral college votes. The newly elected president is set to take the oath of office on Jan. 20, 2025. In addition to the presidency, Trump's Republican Party also appeared set to gain control of both Houses of Congress.

"Don't criticize Trump, be very careful when you say anything about the presidential election," said a second Liberal MP in describing Trudeau's advice to MPs last week. Trump's "not exactly predictable. Why make things worse? It's good advice, in my view, you don't want to piss off your biggest trading partner and neighbour."

A third MP supported Trudeau's advice, noting that, given the previously rocky relationship between the two leaders, even a comment from a backbench MP perceived as criticism of Trump could have repercussions, as it would be seen as coming from the government caucus. The MP added that, this time, the stakes are higher for Canada in terms of trade relations, as it will be Trump's second term, and he's already said he won't run again, and doesn't have to worry about re-election. Given the president-elect's temperament, he could take any course of action regarding the bilateral relationship.

"Don't say something that could offend him [Trump]," said the MP describing Trudeau's instructions to the government caucus. "Be extra cautious, do not make any jokes, things like that."

Some MPs, however, disagreed with Trudeau's advice, arguing that the prime minister represents the opposite of everything the president-elect stands for on issues like immigration, trade, and the environment, among others. These MPs said they believe that



Republican Party candidate Donald Trump was elected for a second term as U.S. president with a commanding lead in the Nov. 5 election. His party now also controls the Senate. *Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons*

the prime minister and Liberal MPs should not be hesitant to speak their minds. They added that, regardless of the leaders' relationship, the next round of CUSMA negotiations will be challenging. They also suggested that the party should not shy away from branding Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) as "Canada's Trump," and should highlight Poilievre's stance on issues, including the Freedom Convoy.

"The more you tiptoe around Trump, the more Trump will trample you," the fourth MP said. "So, I don't actually understand why he [Trudeau] said what he said."

When Trump was first elected in 2016, Parliament was not in session, and Trudeau held a conference call with all Liberal MPs, advising them to be cautious in their statements or—ideally—to remain silent. At the time, Dem-

ocratic candidate Hillary Clinton had been widely expected to win.

Last week, the Prime Minister's Office announced that Trudeau is re-establishing the Cabinet Committee on Canada-U.S. Relations. The committee is headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.), and Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.) is the vice chair. Freeland was the lead minister—then-foreign minister—in Trump's first term to renegotiate NAFTA.

Other members include Treasury Board President Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.), Defence Minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.), Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.), Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.), Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, P.E.I.), Immigration Minister Marc Miller (Ville-Marie-Le Sud-Ouest-Îles-Soeurs, Que.), and International Trade Minister Mary Ng (Markham-Thornhill, Ont.).

The committee was initially formed after Trump's first election in 2016. At one of its meetings, the Trudeau cabinet invited former Progressive Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney, known for his connections within the U.S. Republican establishment. It was during Mulroney's tenure that Canada and the U.S. negotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Liberal MP John McKay (Scarborough-Guildwood, Ont.) said that the bilateral link with the U.S. is Canada's most important relationship, requiring ongoing monitoring and flexibility. He added that when the presidency transitions between administrations, it demands adaptability—a

challenge Canada has successfully met throughout its history. McKay added that it remains to be seen whether Trump will implement the trade tariffs on which he campaigned, and an analysis of those actions would clarify their impact on Canada.

"Lots of things get said in the campaign; some occasionally materialize," said McKay. "I guess we will deal with what materializes if and when it does materialize, particularly the comments about tariffs will be a bit more carefully reviewed once the consequences of tariffs are analyzed."

Meanwhile, political insiders interviewed for this article suggested that the Liberals are unlikely to succeed if they attempt to brand Poilievre as "Canada's Trump." They said that people are smart enough to recognize the distinction between the two men.

"The next Canadian election is going to be about Canadian things, and some of those issues are similar to what they are in the United States," said Darrell Bricker, CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs, in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "And there may be some issues that emerge from the United States that are going to have some effect on Canada. But simply going around and saying Pierre Poilievre is Donald Trump isn't going to do anything."

Kyla Ronellenfitch, a pollster and political management instructor at Carleton University in Ottawa, agreed. "I can imagine some Canadian progressives feeling a twisted bit of relief—'Well, at least we can now run against Trump!' For that to work, Poilievre and Trump would need to be viewed as similar," she wrote in a piece, titled "Four lessons for Canadian progressives," published Nov. 6 on her page, *Relay with Kyla Ronellenfitch*. "The work hasn't been done to create that connection. In my September poll, I found 20 per cent of Canadians think Poilievre and Trump are 'extremely similar,' 23 per cent think they are 'somewhat similar,' 39 per cent think they are 'somewhat' or 'totally different,' and 17 per cent 'aren't sure.'"

Liberal pundit Scott Reid posted Ronellenfitch's piece on X on Nov. 6 and said: "This piece by @KRonellenfitch is so goddamned good. So goddamned smart. So goddamned cut-through-the-bullshit. I want @liberal_party would hook the brain up to a What-DoWeDoNext machine. I want every Liberal in Canada to read it immediately."

Greg Lyle, president of Innovative Research, said that, short of a Liberal leadership change, it is highly unlikely that any other factor will narrow the gap between the two parties, given the disparity between the Liberals and Conservatives in national polls. Trudeau's position is further weakened by a letter signed by 24 Liberal MPs urging him to step down, he said.

"How does that make you the guy who's able to take on a really scary guy, when even your own members don't trust you to lead the country," Lyle told *The Hill Times*.

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Journalist accused of being a Russian spy says committee ‘played host to character assassination’

Canadian reporter David Pugliese says he was compelled to testify at committee after being accused of being a Russian asset by ex-Conservative MP Chris Alexander: ‘Not one MP on the committee raised a single critical question about these explosive allegations.’

BY SOPHALL DUCH

A prominent and seasoned Canadian defence reporter has fired back at allegations that he is a Russian asset, and also at the House committee where the sensational claims were made by former Stephen Harper-era Conservative cabinet minister Chris Alexander.

“Hiding behind a cloak of parliamentary privilege, [Alexander] falsely claimed that I had been recruited as a Russian spy in the 1980s, and suggested I am still working as a Russian agent. His preposterous claims were based on several pieces of paper he told you had been examined by experts around the world,” said David Pugliese, an *Ottawa Citizen* reporter, on Nov. 7 at the House Public Safety Committee.

“Astonishingly, not one MP on the committee raised a single critical question about these explosive allegations evolving a veteran Canadian journalist with a 40-year track record. It is the height of irony that a committee studying disinformation would in fact propagate it,” said Pugliese.

The committee is studying Russian interference and disinformation campaigns in Canada. Two weeks earlier, in the same committee room and for the same study, Alexander said KGB documents between 1984 to 1990 revealed that the KGB had recruited and “run as an agent a Canadian citizen who has been a prominent



Ottawa Citizen reporter David Pugliese said ex-Conservative cabinet minister Chris Alexander ‘falsely claimed that I had been recruited as a Russian spy’ at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Nov. 7. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

journalist in this country for over three decades.”

Alexander would then name Pugliese as that potential asset in question.

“You will see in the documents that he is named there very clearly in cursive handwriting as ‘David Pugliese’. He has been working as a journalist in Canada ever since,” said Alexander at the Oct. 24 committee meeting.

The former cabinet minister told MPs that these documents originated from “pre-1991 archives of the Ukrainian KGB”—when Ukraine was still part of the then-Soviet Union.

The aftermath of Alexander’s allegations

Alexander’s bombshell accusations would result in swift denunciation from Pugliese, his employer Postmedia, the Canadian Association of Journalists, countless reporters, and others.

Pugliese previously told *The Canadian Press* that the documents presented to the committee are the same ones in an ongoing civil lawsuit over his reporting on allegedly faulty equipment sent to Ukraine.

The day after Alexander’s testimony, *Global News* reported that the network reached out to two KGB archives in Kyiv, Ukraine, and were told that “no information about the above-mentioned person was found.”

That was something that Pugliese would point out to MPs during his own testimony.

“Although Mr. Alexander claims there are actual studies authenticating his assertions, nothing was provided to this committee, and no-one asked for them,” said Pugliese.

He added that “if Mr. Alexander’s documents are real, it—at best—suggests the Russians looked at my background, which was a common occurrence for journalists, academics, and politicians during the Cold War. How many other Canadians are on this list?”

Pugliese also said that the records Alexander tabled at the committee “are replete with factual errors and falsehoods.”

Pugliese said he was not living in Ottawa, nor was he working for the *Ottawa Citizen* at the time the documents said he did. He said he was working for the *Ottawa Citizen* in 1989 and 1990.

“In short, this committee effectively played host to character assassination without authenticating any of the allegations. In my line of work, no credible journalist in this country would ever publish such wild, damaging allegations based on flimsy assertions,” said Pugliese.

Pugliese also shut down Alexander’s accusation that “previous efforts to expose this journalist’s long-running covert ties to Moscow have resulted in attempts to

intimidate current and former Canadian parliamentarians, including my former colleague James Bezan, as well as Canadian Army officers.”

“When I heard that, I thought we’re entering into a territory of unhinged testimony. I just couldn’t believe it. I don’t know Mr. Bezan,” Pugliese said. “I’ve never intimidated Mr. Bezan. I don’t know what that is about.”

Pugliese was also asked why Alexander would target him.

“What struck me is Mr. Alexander seemed very upset by my journalism. He’s upset that I report about these procurements that go off line. For me, that’s just reporting on where our tax dollars are going,” said Pugliese. “Not everything is Russian disinformation because it might embarrass the Canadian Forces or the government of the day.”

A contrite committee

MPs that Pugliese said aided in Alexander’s “attacks on my character, reputation and journalism” at the Oct. 24 meeting—CPC MP James Bezan (Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman, Man.) and NDP MP Peter Julian (New Westminster-Burnaby, B.C.)—were absent at the Nov. 7 meeting. Both MPs are associate members of the committee.

The MPs that were present at the meeting to hear Pugliese’s testimony appeared to be sympa-

thetic to the situation in which he now finds himself.

“This has put us in quite an interesting position here. It’s always going to make me think going forward what’s real and what’s not real,” said Conservative MP Doug Shipley (Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte, Ont.). “My feelings go to you and your family.”

“I echo comments by my colleagues that say that we’re shocked by the testimony that took place on the 24th by Mr. Alexander,” said Liberal MP Iqbal Ghaheer (Mississauga-Malton, Ont.).

Liberal MP Jennifer O’Connell (Pickering-Uxbridge, Ont.), parliamentary secretary to the public safety minister, explained that committee members only received Alexander’s documents a couple of hours before the meeting, leaving MPs little time to review or even see them.

Bloc Québécois MP Kristina Michaud (Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, Que.) said that Alexander had the appearance of credibility given his former role as a cabinet minister, his current role at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, and his claims of proof.

NDP MP Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan-Malahat-Langford, B.C.) said the committee was not prepared for the kind of testimony Alexander was going to present.

“We don’t have much experience where someone would come before a committee, be protected by parliamentary privilege, and just go after someone the way that [Alexander] did,” said MacGregor.

Parliamentary privilege

What Alexander said at committee is protected by parliamentary privilege, not because he’s a former parliamentarian, but because his testimony is being used for parliamentary work: the committee’s study on Russian interference and disinformation.

Pugliese previously posted on X that Alexander’s “statements would be libelous had he not uttered them behind the security of parliamentary-committee privilege.”

Gaheer asked Pugliese if Alexander had repeated his allegations outside the committee where parliamentary privilege does not apply.

“No, he has not repeated these allegations outside your committee,” responded Pugliese at the Nov. 7 committee meeting.

“If he were to make these allegations outside the security of privilege, would you sue?” asked Gaheer.

“At this point I’m just trying to make sure my family is safe, and I just want to get back to journalism,” responded Pugliese.

Pugliese said he has received death threats, and was told that his family should be deported. He also said he’s had to increase his home security since Alexander made the claims on Oct. 24, CP reported.

The Hill Times had reached out to Alexander for a statement, but did not get a response.

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News

Polls apart: concern for Quebec municipal election clash if federal date moved back

Continued from page 5

“First, it may create confusion and result in information overload for voters, which could hinder voter turnout,” Damphousse wrote. “Second, it creates significant logistical challenges, particularly in terms of workforce and space availability, potentially compromising the security and inclusiveness of electoral processes.”

Both Diwali and the closeness to the Quebec municipal election date were raised by Bloc Québécois MP Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, Que.) at the Oct. 31 and Nov. 5 meetings.

Université de Sherbrooke’s Daoust said at the Oct. 31 meeting that it was important to determine whether shifting the date for Diwali created either more or fewer democratic advantages. The overlap of the Quebec municipal elections would be problematic, he said.

“It would create even more electoral fatigue, and essentially



The Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association wrote to PROC chair Ben Carr, pictured, urging the committee to pass Bill C-65 with the election date change intact. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Quebec’s municipal elections would pay the price of that,” he said in French.

He noted Canadian studies—including one published earlier this year by Alex Rivard, Marc André Bodet, and Véronique Boucher-Lafleur—that showed citizens can become less interested in elections based on their frequency and closeness to one another.

“It depends on a number of political attitudes, of course,” he said. “People become tired, they’re less likely to turn out for an election.”

Liberal MP Sherry Romanado (Longueuil–Charles-LeMoine, Que.) pushed back on the idea of the municipal election clash causing problems. She noted that the 2021 Quebec municipal elections were held on Nov. 7, after a federal election on Sept. 20 of that year.

“I remember going door to door for municipal candidates, and honestly, I never heard anyone say that they didn’t vote or weren’t going to vote because of an overlap,” she said, asking

whether there was data on abstention from voting as a result.

Daoust said there was no data on that point, as methodologically it would be difficult to establish a causal link. But he did note that it would be reasonable to think that electorate fatigue could play a part.

At the Nov. 5 meeting, Peter Loewen, a professor at the University of Toronto’s department of political science, was skeptical of the impact the shifting of the election date would have both to avoid Diwali and on coming close to the Quebec municipal elections.

“To be very candid with you, I think the explanation appears cynical, and I don’t think there’s any concern about holding an election during the period of Diwali, given the number of other opportunities people have to vote, and given the fact that many people who are observant of Diwali—Hindu, Sikhs, and Buddhists alike—would still be happy to vote on the day of the election,” he said. “So I’m not persuaded by

the argument that the date of the election needs to be moved.”

On the impact to the Quebec elections, Loewen said it was common for close proximity between federal and other elections. “We have a lot of democracy in Canada,” he said.

Conservative MP Luc Berthold (Mégantic–L’Érable, Que.) asked Daoust whether the shifting of the election date could lead to increased cynicism and reduced turnout federally.

“When people are more cynical, are less confident in their democratic systems, they tend not to turn out for elections,” Daoust replied in French. “This bill could have an effect on confidence, on satisfaction with the state of democracy, so turnout would decrease; that’s what we’d expect. Would that happen immediately at the next general elections of Canada, or would it happen later? Often this is an incremental effect [and] difficult to quantify.”

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Trump return to White House will test 'rocky' relationship with Trudeau

Continued from page 7

Trump's election may precipitate cabinet shuffle

Turnbull said the election of Trump may be the event to precipitate a cabinet shuffle in Ottawa that has been anticipated for months. This shuffle could now be framed as a response to the U.S. election outcome, she noted.

"This could be a time where [Trudeau] re-orient cabinet as a response to the results of the U.S. election, and tries to put it in the public's mind that he is the right person to deal with Trump," said Turnbull.

The election outcome offers Trudeau the opportunity for a "new focal point," she said, allowing him to say, "Let's stop talking about caucus issues and my leadership and all those sorts of things, and focus on something that is now a very critical situation in terms of managing this relationship."

Trudeau congratulated Trump on "a decisive victory" and said he



Defence Minister Bill Blair said Canada will 'follow carefully if there's a change in any of the NATO members' positions' on Ukraine. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

looked forward to working with the president once again.

"The world is actually even more difficult and more complicated than it was four years ago and I know there is lots of work for us to do," Trudeau told reporters in a morning scrum.

"On our side we've been preparing for this. We're looking forward to doing this work, and we're going to make sure that this extraordinary friendship and

alliance between Canada and the United States continues to the benefit of Canadians, but also people around the world."

Trump's victory leaves questions about NATO's future

Turnbull said another top priority will be to figure out what is going to happen to the NATO

alliance. She noted that Canada's plan to boost defence spending to two per cent of GDP by 2032 will likely not be a suitable timeline for Trump.

Trump has called for "fundamentally reevaluating NATO's purpose and NATO's mission," and suggested he may not defend countries that are not meeting the two per cent spending target.

Asked about whether Trump's return to the White House would affect Canada's timeline to meet this target, Defence Minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.) told reporters "We've got a plan, and we're working hard towards it."

Trump has also advocated for a more isolationist approach to United States foreign policy, focused on "America first," leaving questions about the next administration's support for Ukraine in its ongoing defence against Russia's invasion.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made a lengthy post to X, saying he appreciates "Trump's commitment to the 'peace through strength' approach in global affairs."

"I recall our great meeting with President Trump back in September, when we discussed in detail the Ukraine-U.S. strategic partnership, the Victory Plan, and ways to put an end to Russian aggression against Ukraine," wrote Zelenskyy.

Blair told reporters that Canada's position on Ukraine "remains resolute."

"My expectation is that all members of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group will continue in their support of Ukraine," he said. "We will be interested and follow carefully if there's a change in any of the NATO members' positions."

'The threat of tariffs is real'

Robertson, who was part of the team that negotiated the original NAFTA, said Canada needs to be preparing for the trade irritants that Trump has threatened.

"The Trump victory should convince us that we have to deal with the world as it is, not as we wish it was," said Robertson.

Top of that list will be Trump's pledge to implement a global 10 per cent tariff on all imports, as well as what will happen during the looming review of CUSMA.

Robertson said Trump won't be any less unpredictable or capricious, but will come in with a more organized plan to what he wants to accomplish.

"The threat of tariffs is real, and we should be thinking through what do we do to seek an exemption," he said. "We should be thinking about our own interests and how we deal with that. ... I don't think there will be solidarity. It will be difficult to arrange."

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Lawsuit alleging anti-Black racism in public service at court for class-action certification hearings

Continued from page 4

career development programs for Black public servants.

But Betchi and Thompson have called these federal measures "performative," and "lip service."

"The Black mental health program hasn't treated a single Black person," said Thompson. "Their career development program, it's only for Black executives, and there's only 200 of them in the country. So to give the impression that this is for everyone, no, that's for Black executives."

By the numbers

Thompson told *The Hill Times* that each case of racial discrimination cannot be looked at individually since the broader data that shows Black workers are being disproportionately discriminated will be missed.

He said his journey first started when he started looking at alleged discriminatory practices at the Canada Revenue Agency—the department where he used to work.

"The CRA, at the time, they had about 46,000 workers and one Black



Treasury Board President Anita Anand announces new initiatives as part of the government's work to deliver an action plan for Black public servants on Feb. 21, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

executive—46,000 workers and one Black executive in the entire country," said Thompson. "And when we started looking at the issue beyond the CRA, workers said they were experiencing the same thing."

Expanding out to Canada's civil service, 11,771 out of the 270,798 workers in the federal government's core public administration

identified as Black. When it comes to the executive level, there were 203 Black executives.

Despite there being some gains over the past years in the number of Black workers in the federal public service, the Treasury Board has found that Black public servants are concentrated in lower salary ranges.

"The proportion of Black employees continues to be the highest in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 salary range and lowest in all other salary ranges of \$75,000 and over," found the TBS's 2022-2023 Employment Equity in the Public Service report.

According to the Clerk of the Privy Council's annual report, 58

per cent of Black employees "fall into the 'under \$74,999' salary range, compared to 43 per cent for the core public administration."

Making up for lost time

The BCAS is seeking to recoup billions of dollars in lost salaries and pensions dating back to the 1970s for approximately 45,000 impacted Black public servants.

"There's folks that are retiring and not in dignity because they worked at a very low level the entire time at the government," said Betchi.

If the case is certified as a 'class-action' lawsuit and if the federal court accepts BCAS's class definition, then Canadians like Turner have a chance at being financially compensated for being shut out of the public service career ladder.

Turner said he continued to work past the age of 71 in an effort to get a good pension.

"I'm looking for a pension that was fair," said Turner, who is currently not officially a representative plaintiff in the case. "Without the promotion, my pension was lower."

"So how did it make you feel to be in the public service for so long, and then see colleagues that were on your level or below your level move forward and advance their careers?" asked *The Hill Times*.

"It was frustrating," said Turner. "The number of supervisors I've had in 50 years, or the number of people I came across in 50 years, it was sad."

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Laura Rycckewaert Hill Climbers

PMO staff changes: Marjorie Michel officially exits, and more

Policy adviser and senior co-ordinator Harry Orbach-Miller is among the list of recent departures, and Jacqueline Lee has been promoted to senior manager.

There have been a number of recent comings and goings in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's office, with the official departure of deputy chief of staff **Marjorie Michel** for party headquarters as of Oct. 21 at the top of the list.

Michel, who had been one of two deputy chiefs of staff to Trudeau since her hiring after the 2021 election, was announced as the Liberal Party's new deputy campaign director on Oct. 13, with **Andrew Bevan**, now-former chief of staff to Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister **Chrystia Freeland**, tapped as campaign director.

The daughter of former Haitian prime minister **Smarek Michel**, Marjorie Michel previously served as the party's Quebec director of operations during the 2019 and 2021 federal election campaigns.

Michel has been working for the Trudeau government since 2016, beginning as a policy adviser to then-families, children, and social development minister **Jean-Yves Duclos**. After stepping in as acting chief of staff to Duclos for a stretch in 2017, that November, Michel was promoted to director of parliamentary affairs. In 2019, Michel became the first Black chief of staff under the Trudeau government when she was promoted to officially lead Duclos' office. After that year's election, Michel became chief of staff to Duclos as then-Treasury Board president—a role she held until the 2021 election.

Prior to coming to the Hill, Michel worked as president of MM Stratégies, and as an associate with Lise Cardinal et Associés in Montreal. She's also a former staffer at Quebec's national assembly, including as an aide to then-MNA **Emmanuel Dubourg**, her now-husband who is also the Liberal MP for Bourassa, Que. Michel is a former president of the Bourassa Liberal riding association.

Brian Clow remains deputy chief of staff in the PMO, working under longtime chief of staff **Katie Telford**.

Speaking of Telford, she's had some changes in her own office within the PMO.

In mid-September, director of administration for the office of the chief of staff **Geoff Hall** said his goodbyes to the team after roughly a year on the job.

Before returning to the Hill to take on his most recent role, Hall had been working on contract as a public affairs counselor with government relations and public affairs firm Compass Rose. A former Hill tour guide and ex-special assistant and scheduler in the office of then-Liberal leader **Michael Ignatieff**, Hall first joined Trudeau's PMO as a scheduler in January 2016. He worked his way up to senior manager of tour and scheduling, and then deputy director of the executive office by the time he first bade the office farewell in the fall of 2020. Hall went on to be direc-



Katie Telford, chief of staff to the prime minister, left, arrives for a Liberal caucus meeting in the West Block alongside then-PMO deputy chief of staff Marjorie Michel on Oct. 4, 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

tor of operations to then-labour minister **Filomena Tassi** until the start of 2022, and joined Compass Rose later that year.

Jacqueline Lee, who had been executive assistant to Telford for roughly the last year, has been promoted to senior manager of the office of the chief of staff. Lee previously served as executive assistant to the chief of staff to then-public safety minister **Marco Mendicino**.

Julian Iacob, who was most recently a special assistant to the PMO's senior advisers, has been promoted to senior special assistant as of Oct. 1. Senior advisers currently in the PMO include **Supriya Dwivedi**, **Ben Chin**, **Matt Stickney**, senior adviser for global affairs **Patrick Travers**, strategic adviser for special projects **Jason Easton**, and special adviser for gender **Kate Bezanson**.



Julian Iacob is now a senior special assistant. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

A former production co-ordinator and later manager with TO Live, Iacob has been with Trudeau's office since March 2023, and was originally hired as a media advance. He switched to his most recent role that fall.

Jumping over to the PMO policy team, policy adviser and senior co-ordinator **Harry Orbach-Miller** has bid the top office adieu, with Oct. 24 his last day on the job.

"Today, after five and a half exhilarating years—and too many briefing notes to count—I will be concluding my time in the Prime Minister's Office to return to Toronto for a new challenge," wrote Orbach-Miller in a recent LinkedIn post. "I never expected this journey would be the result when I joined PMO for a four month internship in 2019. I'll always be grateful that it did, and grateful to the many people who supported me along the way."

Among those Orbach-Miller thanked was ex-PMO policy director **Marci Surkes**,



Harry Orbach-Miller has left the PMO. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

who he gave "special thanks to" for having taken "a chance on an inexperienced (but very eager) staffer to assist her during one of the hardest periods of the pandemic."

As noted in his post, Orbach-Miller first joined the PMO as a 2019 summer intern. In early 2020, he landed a full-time job as a special assistant with the executive office, and that fall, he became a policy team co-ordinator and executive assistant to Surkes as then-PMO policy head. Orbach-Miller was promoted to policy adviser and senior co-ordinator in late 2021.

Rick Theis is currently acting director of policy in the PMO, supported by deputy director **Tony Maas**.

As recently reported, **Hartley Witten** has joined the PMO as a senior special assistant for communications fresh from Labour and Seniors Minister **Steven MacKinnon**'s office. In his new role, Witten will help tackle advertising, among other things, in reporting to executive director of communications **Max Valiquette**.

In a more belated update, **Madeleine Robert**, who was previously a digital media



Madeleine Robert is a digital strategy co-ordinator in the PMO. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

and communications adviser to Small Business Minister **Rechie Valdez**, is now a digital strategy co-ordinator in Trudeau's office. Prior to working for Valdez, Robert was a special assistant for communications to International Trade Minister **Mary Ng**.

There's been turnover within the PMO issues management and parliamentary affairs team, as well.

Back in late August, **Abdel Amin** was hired as a new parliamentary affairs and issues management co-ordinator, fresh from Families, Children, and Social Development Minister **Jenna Sudds**' office where he'd been a special assistant for parliamentary affairs since October 2023.

More recently, parliamentary affairs and issues adviser **Manuela Tomic** marked her last day with the PMO on Oct. 29. **Hill Climbers** understands she is now once again working for Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly**, this time as a senior adviser for consular affairs, intelligence, and exports.

Tomic had been with the PMO for roughly a year in all, and before then spent roughly a year and a half working for Joly, starting as assistant to the parliamentary secretary and for consular affairs and ending as a special assistant for parliamentary affairs and issues management.

Hallie Stacey-Sullivan is deputy director of issues management, while Clow remains the senior-most staffer in charge of parliamentary affairs and issues management in Trudeau's office.

Over in the operations and outreach unit led by director **Jeff Valois**, special assistant **Ahmed Absiye** has exited. **Hill Climbers** understands he marked his last day with the PMO on Sept. 12 and has since joined Sudds' office as assistant to the minister's parliamentary secretary, Liberal MP **Élisabeth Brière**.

Absiye joined the PMO earlier this year, and before then he was a parliamentary assistant to Prince Edward Island Liberal MP **Robert Morrissey**.

As reported last month, **Lauriane Songuissa** recently left the PMO—where she'd been an outreach adviser—to become director of operations to Minister Valdez.



Laura Robichaud is a correspondence writer with the PMO. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Finally, turning to the PMO correspondence team, while **Hill Climbers** has already reported the September hiring of correspondence writer **Deborah Allotey**, missed at the time was the hiring of **Laura Robichaud** as a correspondence writer.

Robichaud interned with the PMO correspondence team this past summer, and was subsequently hired full-time. According to her LinkedIn profile, she's currently in the midst of working towards a bachelor's degree in economics and political science at the University of Waterloo, and became vice-president of the school's Young Liberals association this past spring.

Jean-Luc Marion is director of correspondence.

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Stuart Benson

Party Central

Tuesday night pints and U.S. presidential punditry at The Met

Politico and Earncliffe Strategies hosted a U.S. election-watch party on Nov. 5 at the Métropolitain Brasserie, featuring trivia, punditry, and special guest U.S. Ambassador David Cohen.

Whether you were rooting for **Kamala Harris** or **Donald Trump** to win the American presidential election on Nov. 5, one thing's for sure: if you passed on watching the results roll in at the Métropolitain Brasserie, you missed out on one hell of a party.

Arriving just before 6 p.m., the Met was already begging to fill up as the first polls were closing south of the border. Upon entering, guests were directed to either the front bar room for socializing, or for photos with the allegedly to-scale cardboard cutouts of both candidates, or to the rear bar and reception area where flat-screen TVs were displaying live election coverage from CNN, Fox News, and CBC. **Sarah Chown**, the Met's managing partner, sends her apologies to CTV News, as there's only so much magic one woman can work with a bunch of Amazon Firesticks and a single cable subscription.

As the first few results began to trickle in over the next hour, **Party Central** conducted an incredibly unscientific straw poll of attendees. While Harris had a sizable edge on the question of whom they most hoped would win, when asked whom they expected to win, the answers were far less optimistic.

One of the most memorable responses from one hopeful Harris supporter was a shouted "that's not fair" in response to the latter question.

Another Harris supporter described their feelings for the night as "optimistically nauseous," though given how the night bore out and how busy the bar was, **Party Central** wagers many attendees woke up feeling only the latter.

Keeping a much braver face was U.S. Ambassador to Canada **David Cohen**—the night's guest of honour—who predicted that the true winner of the night would be "democracy."

You can read more coverage on Cohen's speech and other light punditry from the party in the Nov. 6 edition of *Politics This Morning*. You can also catch Cohen's interview conducted live from the Met during CPAC's election night coverage.

Cohen wasn't the only member of the diplomatic circle in attendance, as Ukraine's Ambassador **Yulia Kovaliv**, Israel's Ambassador **Iddo Moed**, and German

Ambassador **Tjorven Bellman** also made appearances to mingle, and to keep tabs on the results.

As the night went on, hundreds of other guests flowed in and out of the bar. **Party Central** spotted Mental Health Minister **Ya'ara Saks** and International Development Minister **Ahmed Hussen**; Liberal MPs **Jean Yip**, **Rob Oliphant**, and **Lisa Hepfner**; Conservative MPs **Dave Epp** and **Blaine Calkins**; NDP MP **Gord Johns**, Bloc Québécois MPs **Andréanne Larouche**, **Stéphane Bergeron**, and **Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay**; Senators **Colin Deacon**, **Donna Dasko**, **Brent Cotter**, and **Julie Miville-Dechéne**; the PMO's **Katie Telford**, **Brian Clow**, **Supriya Dwivedi**, **Oz Jungic**, and **Hartley Witten**; Liberal National Campaign Director **Andrew Bevan**; **Anthony Carricato** and **Mathieu Gravel** with the House Speaker's Office; the NDP's **Anne McGrath**, principal secretary to NDP Leader **Jagmeet Singh**, and plenty of staffers from across the political spectrum.

Alongside the politicians, there were also plenty of politicians on hand, including Sandstone Group's **Kevin Bosch**, Strategy Corp's **Gary Keller**, Crestview Strategies' **Muhammad Ali** and **Sam O'Grady**, Blackbird Strategies' **Maddie Eisenberg**, Sussex Strategy Group's **Liam Daly**, Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers Association's **Brian Kingston**, Pendulum Group's **Heather Bakken**, Business Council of Canada's **Howard Fremeth**, RBC's **George Wamala**, U15's **Dylan Handley**, national security expert **Stephanie Carvin**, and **Dallas Smith**, spokesperson for First Nations for Finish Stewardship.

Of course, there were also several journalists, including CPAC's **Emily Haws** and **Cam Ryan**; *Politico*'s **Nick Taylor-Vaisey**, **Mickey Djuric**, and **Kyle Duggan**, who recently announced he will be joining **Dylan Robertson** at The Canadian Press; independent journalist **Paul Wells**; Bloomberg's **Brian Platt**; and CTV News' **Mike Le Couteur** and **Stephanie Ha**.

While Taylor-Vaisey attempted to keep the crowd engaged with some light punditry—with the aide of Canada 2020 CEO **Branden Caeley**, and the chance to win a gift certificate to the Met and a bottle of wine—the crowd began to deflate just after 9 p.m. as the now-President-Elect Trump's lead continued to widen.

While **Party Central** isn't bothered either way—excepting whether or not an invitation to the after-party on Trump's first official visit is still on the table—with the results becoming more and more clear, it was time to head home, turn on both computer monitors, and watch all the pundits learn the exact wrong lessons, again, while The Donald-Victorious danced to **The Village People**.

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The Hill Times



Brian Clow, left, Andrew Bevan, and Katie Telford.



Earncliffe Strategies' Mary Anne Carter, left, and Google's Sean Murphy.

*Politico*'s Mickey Djuric, left, and Howard Fremeth, Business Council of Canada.

Ukraine's Ambassador Yulia Kovaliv, CTV News' Mike Le Couteur, and Pendulum Group's Heather Bakken.

Posing between the allegedly 'to scale' cardboard cutouts of Donald Trump, left, and Kamala Harris, right, are Murphy, CPAC's Emily Haws, and *Politico*'s Nick Taylor-Vaisey.

Israel's Ambassador Iddo Moed, left, and U.S. Ambassador David Cohen.



Paolo Sarzana, left, TLScontact senior vice-president; Crestview Strategy's Sam O'Grady, and TLScontact CEO Gabriele Piva.



Senator Brent Cotter, left, his wife Elaine Gibson, Kovaliv, Senator Donna Dasko, and Senator Julie Miville-Dechéne



Djuric, left, Taylor-Vaisey, and Bakken.



Liberal MP Rob Oliphant, left, Anne McGrath, principal secretary to NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, and Conservative MP Greg McLean.

The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson



International Development Minister Ahmed Hussen, left; Isabella Orozco-Madison, press secretary to Minister Joly; and Bahoz Dara-Aziz, comms director for Minister Anandasangaree.



Liberal staffers Wilder Walker-Stewart, left, Lhori Webster, Hartley Witten, Meron Cheway, and Andie Habert.

Feature

Parliamentary Calendar

Remembrance Day ceremony to take place at National War Memorial in Ottawa on Nov. 11



The Remembrance Day ceremony at the National War Memorial in Ottawa on Nov. 11, 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

MONDAY, NOV. 11

House Not Sitting—The House 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.

Remembrance Day—Parliamentarians are in their ridings for Remembrance Day this week. A ceremony will take place at the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

TUESDAY, NOV. 12

Stephen Harper to Receive Defender of Israel Award—Former prime minister Stephen Harper will receive the Defender of Israel Award at an event hosted by the Abraham Global Peace Initiative. Tuesday, Nov. 12, at the Meridian Arts Centre, 5040 Yonge St., North York, Ont. Details: agpiworld.com.

Ambassadors' Speaker Series—Indonesia's Ambassador to Canada, Daniel Tumpal S. Simanjuntak, will deliver remarks on "Indonesia and Canada: Forging Stronger Bilateral Ties for a Shared Future," part of the Ambassadors' Speaker Series hosted by Carleton University. Tuesday, Nov. 12, at 5:30 p.m. ET at The Westin Ottawa Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: carleton.ca.

Minister Miller to Attend Fundraiser—Immigration Minister Marc Miller will join Liberal MP Ron McKinnon for a fundraiser hosted by the Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam Federal Liberal Association. Tuesday, Nov. 12 at 6 p.m. PT at IbeX Café + Kitchen, 3537 Princeton Ave., Coquitlam, B.C. Details: liberal.ca.

TUESDAY, NOV. 12—WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13

2024 PAAC Annual Conference—The Public Affairs Association of Canada hosts its annual conference on the theme: "40 years of PAAC: the Mosaic of Public Affairs." Panels and sessions will cover topics from government

relations, communications, and polling, including an in-depth analysis of the recent American presidential election, and fighting back against the growing anti-lobbying rhetoric. Tuesday, Nov. 12, to Wednesday, Nov. 13, at George Brown College's Waterfront Campus, 51 Dockside Dr., Toronto. Details: publicaffairs.ca.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13

Minister Miller to Deliver Remarks—Immigration Minister Marc Miller will share updates on Canada's immigration plans, and how they will impact businesses and the Canadian economy at a breakfast event hosted by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. Wednesday, Nov. 13, at 7:30 a.m. PT, at a location to be announced. Details online: boardoftrade.com.

Partnership for Global Development—The Aga Khan Foundation Canada host a panel discussion, "A Transformative Partnership for Global Development: Canada and the Aga Khan University," exploring the link between investing in higher education and advancing sustainable development. Wednesday, Nov. 13, at 9 a.m. ET at the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam, 199 Sussex Dr., and online. Register via Eventbrite.

PBO Giroux to Deliver Remarks—Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux will deliver remarks on "The State of the Economy and Government Finances," a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Association for Business Economics. Wednesday, Nov. 13, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 15th Floor, 99 Bank St. Details: cabc.ca.

Adam Chapnick to Discuss His New Book—The Bill Graham Centre hosts Adam Chapnick from Canadian Forces College who will discuss his new book co-authored with Asa Mckercher, *Canada First, Not Canada Alone: A History of Canadian Foreign Policy*. Wednesday,

Nov. 13, at 4 p.m. ET online and in person at the Munk School, 1 Devonshire Pl., Toronto. Details: billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13—THURSDAY, NOV. 14

First Nations Homelessness and Mental Wellness Forum—The Assembly of First Nations hosts the National First Nations Homelessness and Mental Wellness Forum featuring plenary sessions, interactive dialogues, and workshops to promote holistic and culturally informed policy approaches. Wednesday, Nov. 13, to Thursday, Nov. 14, at the Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel, 999 Canada Place, Vancouver. Details: afn.ca.

THURSDAY, NOV. 14

NDP Leader Singh to Deliver Remarks—NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh will deliver remarks on "Investing in workers. Growing the economy" at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Thursday, Nov. 14, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

Conservative MP Chong to Deliver Remarks—Conservative MP Michael Chong will take part in a conversation about Canadian foreign policy issues hosted by the Balsillie School of International Affairs. Thursday, Nov. 14, at 2 p.m. ET in Room 1-42, 67 Erb St. W., Waterloo, Ont. Details: balsillieschool.ca/events.

'The Long View of Canadian Cabinet Governance'—Carleton University hosts a lecture, "From Galt to Freeland: The Long View of Canadian Cabinet Governance" featuring J.P. Lewis, professor of political science at the University of New Brunswick Saint John. His major research interests are in cabinet government with a focus on Canada both at the provincial and federal level. Thursday, Nov. 14, at 2:30 p.m.

ET at A602 Loeb Building, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details: carleton.ca.

Minister Gould to Attend Fundraiser—Government House Leader Karina Gould is expected to attend an fundraising event hosted by the Burlington Federal Liberal Association. Thursday, Nov. 14, at 6 p.m. ET at a private home in Toronto. Details: liberal.ca.

In Defence of Democracy 2024—The Samara Centre for Democracy hosts the "2024 In Defence of Democracy" lecture featuring award-winning investigative journalist Connie Walker in conversation with Nahlah Ayed, host of CBC Radio's *IDEAS*, discussing the importance of storytelling in advancing reconciliation, justice and democratic renewal. Thursday, Nov. 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St., Toronto. Details: samaracentre.ca.

Fundraiser for Liberal MP Bains—Liberal MP Parm Bains hosts his annual "Year in Review" fundraiser. Thursday, Nov. 14, at 6:30 p.m. PT at the Riverside Grand Ballroom, 135-1231 Burdette St. Richmond, B.C. Details: liberal.ca.

FRIDAY, NOV. 15

Minister Miller to Deliver Remarks—Immigration Minister Marc Miller will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Friday, Nov. 15, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

Parliamentary Privilege in Practice—The Canadian Study of Parliament Group hosts the first in a series of three lectures this parliamentary session. Today's bilingual hybrid presentation, "Parliamentary Privilege in Practice," explores some of the least understood but most foundational elements of our parliamentary system, bringing together practitioners and academics. Friday, Nov. 15, at 10 a.m. ET in Room 425, 180 Wellington St. Details via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, NOV. 15—SUNDAY, NOV. 17

'Reimagining Political Journalism'—Carleton University hosts a conference, "Reimagining Political Journalism: Perils, Possibilities and What Comes Next," from Nov. 15-17. Speakers include *The Hill Times'* managing editor Charelle Evelyn and columnist Erica Ifill; Amira Elghawaby, the federal special representative on combatting Islamophobia; former Conservative staffer and ex-vice-president of Sun News Network Kory Tenyck; Anishnaabe writer Niigaan Sinclair, *The Globe and Mail's* Bob Fife, and *Le Devoir's* Marie Vastel. Friday, Nov. 15 to Sunday, Nov. 17 at Richcraft Hall, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details online: cusjc.ca.

FRIDAY, NOV. 15—SUNDAY, NOV. 30

European Union Film Festival—The Canadian Film Institute and the missions of the European Union member states host the 39th European Union Film Festival in Ottawa running from Nov. 15-30. Tonight's opening film, *Some Birds*, is from Hungary, which currently holds the EU presidency, and the Embassy of Hungary will host a reception. Friday, Nov. 15, at 6:30 p.m. ET at the Ottawa Art Gallery, 50 Mackenzie King Bridge. Details: cfi-icf.ca/euff24.

MONDAY, NOV. 18

State of the Relationship Gala—The Canadian American Business Council hosts its 30th annual State of the Relationship Gala. Monday, Nov. 18, in Ottawa. Details to follow: cabcc.co.

Middle East Strategy Forum—The Institute for Peace and Diplomacy hosts the fourth annual Middle East Strategy Forum featuring panels, on-stage interviews with policymakers, and networking sessions. Participants include former Canadian ambassadors Jon Allen and Arif Lalani, and Stephan Klement, EU special envoy for non-proliferation and disarmament and special adviser on the Iran nuclear issue. Monday, Nov.

18, at 9 a.m. ET at the Delta Hotels Ottawa City Centre, 101 Lyon St. N. Details: peacediplomacy.org.

Party Under the Stars—To the Stan and Back hosts its fundraiser in support of PTSD wellness programs for Canadian veterans and frontline responders. Open bar, great food, silent auction. Musical guest: Canadian Music Hall of Fame Inductee Jason McCoy. Monday, Nov. 18, at 6 p.m. ET at Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Details via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, NOV. 18—TUESDAY, NOV. 19

Organic Summit 2024—The Canadian Organic Trade Association hosts its two-day Organic Summit 2024. The first day will feature presentations followed by an evening reception on Parliament Hill. The second day features meetings between organic leaders with Members of Parliament and Senators. Monday, Nov. 18, to Tuesday, Nov. 19, at the Delta Hotels Ottawa City Centre, 101 Lyon St. N. Details via Eventbrite.

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

