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As the **campaign** kicks off, parties fight to prove they have the country's back

Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

CBC's Montreal HQ to host leaders' debates April 16 and 17



Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet scrums with reporters after the official leaders' debate in Gatineau, Que., on Oct. 7, 2019. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The CBC's broadcast headquarters in Montreal—La Maison de Radio-Canada—has been chosen as the venue for both of the upcoming federal election's official leaders' debates.

The independent Leaders' Debates Commission confirmed the location and dates on March 24, one day after Prime Minister Mark Carney called the election.

"The decision to use existing technical facilities and studios was taken jointly by the Commission and the debates producer. It is a fiscally prudent and cost-effective approach that will guarantee high-quality production standards," reads the press release.

The French-language debate will take place on April 16 at 8

p.m. ET, and will be moderated by Radio-Canada news anchor **Patrice Roy**, while the debate in English is scheduled for the next day, April 17, at 7 p.m. ET, and will be hosted by TVO anchor **Steve Paikin**.

When the commission announced the moderators back in October, it also confirmed that CBC and Radio-Canada would produce, promote, and distribute the debates, which will also be streamable free on YouTube.

Meanwhile, Bloc Québécois Leader **Yves-François Blanchet** is calling out Carney for not accepting TVA's terms for its own head-to-head francophone debate.

"The Liberal leader claims to have the strength and courage to confront **Donald Trump**, but he

doesn't even have the courage to come and speak to Quebecers," Blanchet posted in French on X on March 24. The Quebec-owned television network was asking that each of the four main federal parties in that province pay \$75,000 to take part.

The Canadian Press reported the TVA debate's executive producer **Louis-Philippe Neveu** as saying "given the difficult financial, economic, and competitive situation facing TVA Group and other industry members, the only option for producing the show is to ask parties to contribute to production costs," and that the funds would "only cover part of those costs and will not yield any profit to TVA."

Carney, Robertson, and Keller announce their ridings

On the flip side, the list of notable people who are running in this election is also growing by the day.

New on the list since March 24 is the prime minister himself. **Mark Carney** confirmed he will run in the Ottawa riding of Nepean, Ont., which until recently was held by **Chandra Arya** since 2015. Arya was disqualified from the recent Liberal leadership race, and had his nomination in the riding revoked for unspecified reasons on March 20.

Out West, former Vancouver mayor **Gregor Robertson** confirmed on March 23 that he is also running for the red team in the riding of Vancouver Fraserview-South Burnaby, B.C.

And StrategyCorp consultant and ex-Tory staffer **Garry Keller** is running for the Conservative Party in the northern Ontario riding of Nipissing-Timiskaming,



Gregor Robertson, left, is the Liberal candidate in Vancouver Fraserview-South Burnaby, B.C., and Garry Keller is the Conservative candidate in Nipissing-Timiskaming, Ont. *The Hill Times* photographs by Stuart Benson and Ulle Baum

he announced in a video on X on March 23. Keller served as chief of staff to then-Conservative foreign affairs minister **John Baird**. Nipissing-Timiskaming has been held by Liberal MP **Anthony Rota** since 2015.

Black Class Action denied certification

The Black Class Action Secretariat said it is disappointed with a March 13 Federal Court ruling against certifying its lawsuit, but has vowed to keep up its fight to address decades of systemic racism in the civil service.

"For five years, this has been a David vs. Goliath battle, and while today's outcome is frustrating, it only strengthens our resolve," the secretariat wrote in a statement following Justice **Jocelyn Gagné's** ruling in an "order and reasons" document which said "the case did not sufficiently meet the class-action requirement that the claims raise common issues," according to *The Canadian Press*. Gagné's ruling follows a 13-day hearing that wrapped up in November 2024.

Representative plaintiff **Nicholas Marcus Thompson** took

cold comfort in Gagné's recognition on the court's behalf of "the profoundly sad ongoing history of discrimination suffered by Black Canadians." He said: "We put our faith in the courts to recognize the profound harm caused to Black workers over decades. Instead, the government used procedural loopholes to avoid accountability, leaving thousands of Black public service workers betrayed and still fighting for justice."

Launched in 2020, the lawsuit seeks to address decades of systemic racism in the federal public service. The plaintiffs represent 45,000 current and former Black public service workers who have faced systemic discrimination.

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Five incumbents join 'not running again' list

The list of sitting MPs who aren't running again in this election stands at 63 as of March 24, with a handful of Liberals and Conservatives announcing their intentions in the days and hours before Prime Minister **Mark Carney** called an election on March 23.

Former cabinet ministers **Randy Boissonnault** and **Kirsty Duncan** each took to X on March 21, posting their respective statements on why they are not reoffering. "It is no secret that the last year has been an incredibly difficult one for me and my family. For many, this decision will be a surprise or even a shock," wrote Boissonnault, who has represented the Alberta riding of Edmonton Centre on and off since 2015. "It is time for me to embark on a new adventure." Boissonnault was in then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau's** cabinet first as tourism minister and then as employment minister from October 2021 until November 2024.

Five-term Ontario MP **Duncan**—who had only just returned to the House on Oct. 21, 2024, after a successful battle against cancer—noted "it is with a heavy heart that I step back from this coming election. Serving you has been the greatest honour of my life." Duncan is a scientist by training, and served as minister for sports, science, and then as deputy government leader in the House from January 2018 until December 2021.

Also on March 21, Conservative MP **Richard Lehoux** wrote in French that he's decided to not run again, noting his choice was made after a long and hard period of reflection, "and for personal reasons," saying it's the "best decision to make at this moment in my life." He called his two terms in Ottawa as an "immense honour and a privilege" he will cherish always. Lehoux has represented the Quebec riding of Beauce since 2019, taking the riding long held by then-Conservative MP **Maxime**

Bernier—who is running again in that same riding as leader of his People's Party of Canada.

On March 22, Alberta's **Len Webber** posted on social media that after 10 years as MP, "the time has come to pass the torch" in Calgary Confederation, which he's held since 2015. "This was not an easy decision, but one that I have come to after long and thoughtful consideration." And on March 23—the day of the election call—Conservative MP **Larry Maguire** announced he would not be standing for a fifth term for health reasons: "This decision is based on being recently informed of a concerning health condition that may prevent me from participating in some or all of the campaign and could impede my ability to give my full attention," noting he feels "incredibly blessed." Maguire first came to Ottawa following a byelection win in 2013, and is a former provincial politician.



Kirsty Duncan, top left; Randy Boissonnault; Richard Lehoux, bottom left; Larry Maguire; and Len Webber have all chosen not to reoffer in this election. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade, Stuart Benson, Cynthia Münster, and courtesy of ParIVu and X



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‘Canada is cold but Turks on fire’: Turkish Canadians call on Ottawa to condemn the arrest of country’s opposition leader

Canada’s response to political turmoil in Turkey will be a key factor in shaping the voting decisions for members of diaspora, says a community member.

BY IREM KOCA

Turkish Canadians are calling on the federal government to condemn the “unlawful and politically motivated” arrest of Ekrem Imamoglu in Istanbul. The Turkish opposition leader and key rival to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was first detained, then jailed pending trial on corruption charges on March 23.

About 250 people gathered in front of the Centennial Flame on Parliament Hill on March 22 for a rally organized by the Canadian Association of Social Democrats (CASD) in solidarity with millions of protesters in Turkey taking to the streets in major cities after Imamoglu’s detention. Among those at the Ottawa rally were university students, seniors, and a notable number of young children—some as young as four years old.

Mass protests in Turkey broke out last week after Imamoglu’s alma mater, Istanbul University, annulled his degree over alleged irregularities—disqualifying him from running for president. A day later, on March 19, Imamoglu was detained along with more than 100 people—including opposition figures, journalists, and businessmen—for a corruption investigation, with allegations he denies. The Istanbul mayor has been preparing to run in the 2028 presidential election as leader of the main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP), which called his arrest a judicial “coup,” and an attempt by Erdogan to block his most serious challenger.

Turkish Canadians from Ottawa and Gatineau who shared that sentiment were modest in number but vocal, and determined not to let their message be drowned out by the rain last Saturday. They chanted “[We’re here] for rights, justice, and the rule of law,” and, “No salvation alone. It’ll either be all of us, or none of us,” as some waved red-and-white Turkish flags.

“Canada is cold but Turks are on fire,” read one sign—fittingly

Turkish Canadians rally on Parliament Hill on March 22 in solidarity with protesters in Istanbul ahead of the arrest of Turkish opposition leader Ekrem Imamoglu on March 23. *The Hill Times* photograph by Irem Koca



Turkish Canadians gathered by the Centennial flame on March 22, chanting ‘No salvation alone. It’ll either be all of us, or none of us,’ as some waved red-and-white Turkish flags. *The Hill Times* photograph by Irem Koca



so, with the frosty weather that day. Others read: “Ottawans are with you,” “Make Turkiye slay again,” and “Erdo-gone: Pack your palace.”

Kevser Taymaz, a CASD board member, told *The Hill Times* the Turkish community had gathered to show solidarity with friends and family in Turkey “who are defying all bans on gatherings to protest the arrest of their future president.” She said the group expects Ottawa to take a stand in support of Turkish democracy.

“Our home, Canada, has always stood firm in defending

democracy and human rights. We expect our political leaders and representatives to uphold those same principles by supporting democracy and the rule of law in Turkey,” Taymaz said.

Gözde Bilgin, a mother of two children aged 10 and eight, was among a dozen families who attended the rally with their kids. “We brought our kids because we wanted to show them the importance of exercising the right to protest peacefully,” Bilgin told *The Hill Times*, speaking in Turkish.

“Whether we live in Turkey or in Canada, we carry our moral

and ethical values with us wherever we go. The core principles of democratic governance and judicial independence have been shaken in Turkey. The arrest of Imamoglu is just the last straw. Our protest is aimed at those injustices,” added Bilgin.

While some demonstrators declined to speak on the record—citing concerns about their employment or visa status—many said on background that despite coming from very different political backgrounds, they were united in this rally, and plan on gathering again

in the future to show unity against what they view as unjust and undemocratic governance in Turkey.

A Turkish court formally charged and detained Imamoglu on March 23, one day after the Ottawa rally—at a moment when most Canadians were focused on national news, awaiting Prime Minister Mark Carney’s snap election announcement. That call has now been made, and the country is heading to the polls on April 28.

Taymaz said the rapidly growing Turkish community is closely watching the responses from federal representatives on developments in Turkey. “These responses will be a key factor in shaping our community’s voting decisions in the upcoming federal elections,” Taymaz said.

According to data from the 2021 Canadian census, 76,745 individuals identify their ethnic origin as Turkish, which does not include thousands of temporary Turkish residents who were given special visas to live and work in Canada after the devastating February 2023 earthquake in Turkey killed more than 60,000 people.

“We urge the government to take a principled and public stand against the authoritarian measures targeting Turkey’s opposition voices,” reads a statement by the CASD.

“Turkish Canadians are a vibrant community that has long served as a bridge between Canada and Turkey—nurturing diplomatic, trade, academic, and cultural ties. They expect their federal representatives to stand with them in this moment of political turmoil—not only as a moral obligation, but as a strategic partner recognizing the responsibility of all NATO allies to support a free and democratic Turkey, for its people and for the stability of the region,” reads the statement.

Erdogan, an increasingly polarizing but powerful politician, has ruled Turkey for more than two decades. A 2017 referendum cemented his executive powers, allowing him to tighten control over the country’s democratic institutions. While supporters credit him with early economic growth and major infrastructure projects, critics say he has dismantled democratic checks and been steering the country toward authoritarianism.

So far, Germany, France, Greece, and the Council of Europe have condemned and expressed concern over the situation. A U. S. State Department spokesperson acknowledged the wide-spread protests but called it an “internal legal” matter for Turkey.

Global Affairs Canada has not issued any messages of condemnation and did not immediately respond to *The Hill Times*’ questions. However, the department did update its travel advisory for Turkey on March 22, asking Canadians to exercise a high degree of caution, citing “political demonstrations to include the risk of arbitrary arrest.”

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Understanding China's Diplomacy: Providing China's Certainty to the Uncertain World

We are now living in an increasingly changing and turbulent world, where humanity faces numerous challenges. As a responsible major country, China's role has attracted a lot of attention from the wider international community. I'm sure many Canadian friends are interested as well. Recently, Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi, elaborated on China's foreign policy and external relations at a press conference during the third session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC). I believe his key points could be summed up in four "S"s.

STRATEGIC GUIDANCE. China's great diplomatic achievements are deeply rooted in the strategic guidance of head-of-state diplomacy, the highest form of Chinese diplomacy. Over the past year, President Xi Jinping has personally planned and conducted head-of-state diplomacy, and many fruitful results were achieved. He attended three major diplomatic events held in China, made four critical overseas visits, and hosted many leaders and friends from foreign countries in over 130 diplomatic engagements. As the leader of a major country and a big political party, President Xi Jinping has shown a global vision and shouldered the responsibility of our times, and led China's diplomacy in upholding fundamental principles, breaking new ground, and making steady progress. China's relations with the world have thus undergone positive and profound changes. Over 100 countries support China's Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, and Global Civilization Initiative. More than three quarters of countries across the world have joined the family of Belt and Road cooperation, marking new and solid strides in building a community with a shared future for mankind.

STABILITY. China's diplomacy has brought much-needed stability to global peace and development. We will continue to expand our global partnerships featuring equality, openness and cooperation. China and Russia have found a path of "non-alliance, non-confrontation and not targeting any third party" in developing their relations. Meanwhile, in advancing China-US relations, we will stay committed to the three principles proposed by President Xi Jinping—mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation — to promote steady, sound and sustainable bilateral ties. China will actively use the Chinese approach in resolving hot-spot issues, and write a new chapter of the Global South seeking strength through unity. We will continue to expand high-standard opening up, and share the vast opportunities of Chinese modernization with all countries. We will prove with facts that the path of peaceful development is bright, and can ensure stable and sustainable progress, and that it should be the choice of all countries.

SURENESS. China's diplomacy provides strong sureness to the global cause of upholding international fairness and justice. All countries want to prevent the world from returning to the law of the jungle. To this end, the cornerstone of sovereign equality must be cemented. Those with stronger arms and bigger fists should not be allowed to call the shots. The principle of fairness and justice must be upheld. International affairs must not be monopolized by a small number of countries. Multilateralism must be observed. Small circles should be shattered with greater solidarity. Authority of the international rule of law must be strengthened. Major countries in particular should take the lead in upholding integrity, and embracing the rule of law. Bullying, monopoly, trickery or extortion should not be allowed. China will firmly safeguard the central role of the UN, come forward to be a pillar of the multilateral system, and build a more just and equitable global governance system.

STEADFASTNESS. China's diplomacy has shown unparalleled steadfastness in safeguarding its national interests. The Chinese people have a glorious tradition of relentlessly seeking self-renewal. We never provoke, but we are not intimidated by provocations. The return of Taiwan to China formed an important component of the post-WWII international order. Those seeking "Taiwan independence" will only get themselves burned, and using Taiwan to contain China will be nothing but a futile attempt. China remains resolute in safeguarding its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in accordance with law. We are equally committed to realizing good neighborliness, lasting peace and security in the South China Sea. Meanwhile, China is also witnessing an ever-expanding horizon to become a science and technology powerhouse. "Small yard, high fence" cannot suppress the spirit of innovation, and decoupling or supply chain disruptions will only lead to self-isolation. Facts have proven that no force can stop our historic strides toward the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

This year marks the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Canada, as well as the 20th anniversary of the strategic partnership between our two countries. China is ready to work with the Canadian side to move forward in the spirit of correct perception, mutual respect, seeking common ground while putting aside differences, and mutually-beneficial cooperation, to build a healthy and stable bilateral relationship together. We welcome friends from Canada and other countries to visit China, to see with their own eyes a real and vivid China, and experience firsthand the vigorous vitality of China's economic and social development.

By H. E. WANG Di, Chinese Ambassador to Canada

For more information please visit: <http://ca.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/>

Upper Left Photo: The Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China. [Photo/Xinhua]

Upper Right Photo: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, attends a press conference on China's foreign policy and external relations on the sidelines of the third session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing, capital of China, March 7, 2025. [Xinhua/Liu Dawei]



Stretch between potential April 2 U.S. tariffs and voting day will be 'critical' to the election outcome, say political players

With the next set of tariffs looming, Prime Minister Mark Carney's decision to call an early election is a high-stakes gamble that could backfire, says Innovative Research president Greg Lyle.

BY ABBAS RANA

Seizing the momentum amid the United States' trade war with Canada, Prime Minister Mark Carney has called an early election—a high-stakes move that risks potential layoffs starting on April 2, and sets the stage for one of the most dramatic and consequential campaigns in Canadian history, as the Conservatives, NDP, and Liberals prepare to trade political blows.

"Every day of this campaign is going to be a revelation," said Darrell Bricker, CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs, in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

"And the reason is because the public does not really know Mark Carney. So it's going to be a combination of all of these events that are going to be coming at him, plus the Conservatives coming at him with everything they've got—and the NDP, by the way, too, and the Bloc."

According to Canada's fixed-date election law, the next federal election was scheduled for not later than Oct. 20. However, in a minority Parliament, opposition parties outnumber the governing party and can bring down the government at any time. Until this past December, all opposition parties were threatening to defeat the Liberals as soon as the House came back in 2025. But the political landscape began to shift in early January following then-prime minister Justin Trudeau's announcement that he would step down.

Up to that point, the Pierre Poilievre Conservatives had maintained a strong double-digit lead—about 25 points—ahead of the Liberals for more than a year in national public opinion polls. Then came U.S. President Donald Trump's threats of a trade war, including tariffs on Canadian goods and services. This sparked



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, is politically untested. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, and Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet are expected to target him with damaging revelations. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

a rally-around-the-flag effect that boosted support for the governing Liberals.

Despite not being fully prepared for a campaign, the Liberals decided to call a snap election on March 23, setting April 28 as the voting day. The Trump-triggered trade war has become the ballot issue of the campaign.

Trump, who has been threatening tariffs on Canada and Mexico, has made multiple announcements since being re-elected last November. On March 4, he imposed 25-per-cent tariffs on all Canadian and Mexican goods and 10 per cent on energy exports. The next day, he exempted Ford, GM, and Stellantis until April 2. Now, all eyes are on what Trump will do on that date—whether the tariffs will be fully imposed and remain in place through the election, or if he changes his mind. Both countries trade \$1-trillion worth of goods and services each year.

If the tariffs stay, they could cause widespread layoffs in Ontario's auto sector—a critical battleground with 122 of the 343 seats in the House of Commons.

Pollster Greg Lyle, president of Innovative Research, said that if Carney had waited until October, he could have advanced policies such as boosting internal trade and expanding international trade ties, especially with Europe. In the event of layoffs, he might also have introduced emergency relief measures similar to those used during the COVID-19 pandemic. While Carney could still enact

some of these measures, new programs may require legislation—something that cannot happen until the House returns after the election. If the tariffs remain an issue after April 2, Canadians may start considering giving Poilievre a chance to handle the situation.

"You've got almost four weeks of economic consequences from trade tariffs that could fundamentally change how Canadians feel about what the Liberals have been doing on trade," said Lyle. "The immediate impact of having the tariffs on could be sort of even more anger, and that might actually lift the Liberals, but four weeks later, people might start asking themselves, 'well, if these tariffs aren't going away under the Liberals, maybe we should try the Tories.'"

Lyle said that Carney is still new to politics and has yet to demonstrate the skills needed to perform well in leaders' debates. Lyle said that during the Liberal leadership race, Carney's opponents weren't "out for blood" like Poilievre, who is reoffering in Carleton, Ont.; NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, who is running again in Burnaby South, B.C.; and Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, running for re-election in Beloeil-Chambly, Que. Carney has announced he's running in Nepean, Ont.

In the Feb. 24 French Liberal debate, Carney's language proficiency was a challenge, and following the English debate, he struggled to give a satisfactory answer about whether he was involved in the decision to move

Brookfield's headquarters from Toronto to New York. As the election campaign progresses—especially during the debates—opposition parties may unleash damaging opposition research against him. The French-language debate is scheduled for April 16 in Montreal, followed by the English debate on April 17, also in Montreal.

"Poilievre is a pit bull in this sort of setting," said Lyle. "We just don't know how this is going to play out with Carney in the spotlight. In French, he stumbled, he misspoke, and he had to play defence on that. And then in English debate, he messed up the Brookfield answer. That's something that you can expect all three of them [party leaders] to be all over and who knows what else they'll go after."

On March 8, *Breitbart News* reported that Alberta Premier Danielle Smith urged the U.S. administration to pause its tariffs in order to help Poilievre get elected, believing he aligns closely with Trump on the new direction of American policy. Lyle said that this could be damaging for Poilievre as the ballot question is: who is best positioned to stand up to U.S. tariffs?

Given this alignment, Lyle argued, Poilievre is not that person as his perceived closeness to Trump could work against him.

Bricker said that from a strategic standpoint, the best time to call an election is when a party can win—and right now, the Carney Liberals are riding a wave of national support, making this an opportune moment to head to

the polls. While Bricker acknowledged that the potential April 2 tariffs pose a serious risk for the Liberals, he said that the Conservatives haven't offered any clear solutions, either.

As prime minister, Carney can announce measures to support Canadians impacted by possible layoffs, while Poilievre, as opposition leader, cannot, Bricker said.

Bricker also said that Trump's unpredictability makes it nearly impossible to forecast what challenges might arise three months from now, let alone in October. He added that Carney's status as a political newcomer is prompting Canadians to take a fresh look at the Liberals, who had been trailing in the polls for the past two years.

Prior to making major decisions like calling an election, political parties typically do in-depth internal polling to weigh the pros and cons, Bricker said. The fact that the Liberals have gone ahead only one week after Carney became the prime minister suggests they likely did their due diligence and concluded they have a strong chance of winning.

"Mark Carney's got that new-car smell right now, and he's not going to have that for long," said Bricker. "So: fast campaign when people still haven't made up their minds, positive or negative, but are willing to give them the benefit of the doubt."

Bricker said Smith's comments are going to be damaging for the Conservative Party during this campaign.

"The last thing Pierre Poilievre wants in a sentence associated with the name Poilievre or associated with ... the term Conservative, or the party Conservative, is the word Trump. That's the last thing he wants."

Bricker also downplayed Carney's lack of proficiency in French as an issue, saying that the Trump tariffs and their potential impact on the Canadian economy are top of mind for people across the country, including Quebec. He said none of the three national party leaders are from Quebec, so Quebecers will likely give Carney a break on the language issue.

"Given the agenda and the times, and given who he's up against, it won't be as big a vulnerability as it would be if he was running against somebody from the province," said Bricker.

"If you take a look at comparing Poilievre and Carney, Poilievre would be perceived in the province of Quebec as being someone who's more representative of that western type conservatism, which is not something that's generally supported in the province of Quebec," Bricker said. "So even though neither one of them is a native son—which worked to the advantage of Justin Trudeau and has worked to the advantage of other politicians from the province of Quebec who run for national office—I don't know that it's as big a vulnerability for Carney as the language issue might suggest."

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2  25 ELECTION

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Editorial

Editorial

Election a chance for party leaders to be the adults in the room

Elections are naturally a divisive time. Although the tenor of the campaign and the country currently highlights a call for unity in the face of an external threat, the underlying goal of any election is to split voters into teams and see who ultimately comes out ahead.

But as politicians of—almost—every stripe tap into the “elbows up” mentality running rampant through the country, there are plenty of actors for whom this is an opportunity to sow chaos and disharmony, taking advantage of the partisan nature of the exercise to further their own malign goals.

An election campaign is a good time to see how willing someone is to sweep bad behaviour under the rug so long as it ultimately benefits their team—and that’s what Canadians should be on the lookout for.

This goes beyond the ever-looming threat of foreign interference. Regardless of who has their security clearance to actually hear about how these threats may be affecting their respective campaigns, all of the main party leaders—including Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, who still oddly claims that being informed would be a bad thing, despite recent *Globe and Mail* reporting on CSIS claims that India allegedly poked around in his 2022 leadership bid—have been uniform in calling out and condemning these obvious external threats to the democratic process.

As the country’s chief electoral officer, Stéphane Perrault, highlighted during a March 24 press conference, the issue of foreign interference is “an

ongoing and important discussion,” and importantly, last year’s public inquiry led by Commissioner Marie-Josée Hogue “concluded that the last two general elections were administered with integrity and that our institutions are robust.”

“But her report also speaks of the challenges presented by foreign interference, in particular with respect to disinformation,” Perrault said. “Ensuring that an election is secure requires a whole-of-society approach. It requires all actors involved in elections ... to do their part.”

That disinformation piece from domestic sources is what could really test a leader’s mettle this time around. Sure, the people running meme accounts and sharing nonsense on social media could be Russian puppets or bots, but it’s equally likely that many of them are independent actors who’ve decided they have an axe to grind against a specific party or demographic.

Indulging the basest urges of their respective bases might feel good during this time of stress, but ultimately it weakens the fabric of Canadian ties. Don’t simply brush it off publicly, ignore it, or sidestep it. Call it out. Condemn it. Make it plain that it’s unacceptable. The public take their cues from those who hold some sort of power. This is the time to finally set a good example.

As Perrault said: “We live in an open society. It’s up to each and every one of us to ensure that this is a strength, not a weakness.”

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Cuba should take lessons from Canada, says Ottawa reader

Re: “Cuba and Canada: 80 years of diplomatic relations,” (*The Hill Times*, March 21).

First, I want to acknowledge that, coming from an unfree, one-party autocracy, I fully understand that Cuban Ambassador Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz is required to—literally—tote the party line. The irony that this was being done in the pages of a privately owned newspaper was not lost on myself.

Also ironic was the ambassador’s touting of Canada’s economic support to the socialist miracle that

is the Cuban “economy.” It is our free-market society and the wealth that it creates that is basically keeping the lights on in Havana—well, for a couple of hours per day, anyway.

I should also point out to the ambassador that this country is about to engage in a free and open democratic election where the people will be able to choose their government. Maybe Cuba can join every other country in the hemisphere in the 21st century by finally doing the same.

**Andrew Tyler
Ottawa, Ont.**

The future of the CBC is on the ballot: letter writer

I have lived in five different provinces in Canada—Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador—and have visited all provinces and territories except Yukon. The CBC has been my touchstone wherever I have been, bringing me news of former homes and helping me and my family integrate into a new community. The CBC is an essential service to Canadians in the face of the overwhelming presence of American media.

With a federal election fast approaching, I am writing to draw your readers’ attention to an imminent threat to Canada’s cultural sovereignty—one whose urgency grows by the day as United States President Donald Trump continues his unprovoked economic attacks on our country.

Following decades of underfunding and institutional neglect from governments of all political stripes, the CBC now finds itself in the crosshairs of Pierre Poilievre’s Conservatives, who are promising to defund it altogether.

We cannot stand by and let this happen. Canadians rely on the CBC for informa-

tion, news, and entertainment that speaks to their daily realities and reaffirms their shared values. Defunding our national public broadcaster would inflict immeasurable harm on our communities, on our Canadian identity, and on our democratic health as a country.

Thankfully, the CBC doesn’t belong to the politicians. It belongs to us, the Canadian public—and it’s time we put our foot down. At this critical moment in history, Canadians from all walks of life are closing ranks around our storied institutions. And we expect our elected officials to do the same. We won’t stand for vague promises, and we certainly won’t tolerate any more threats to our shared way of life—foreign or domestic.

That’s why I am standing with Friends of Canadian Media and its hundreds of thousands of supporters this election. When we head to the polls, we’ll be voting to save the CBC. If the federal party leaders want to secure our vote, they have to stand up and support our national public broadcaster.

**Mary-Martha Hale
Ottawa, Ont.**



Trump's most despised adversary has an election



U.S. President Donald Trump seems unlikely to soon give up on his promise to wreck the economy of the land he now deems his country's worst enemy, writes Les Whittington. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/The White House

It's beyond troubling that Canada is always being singled out for its supposedly nasty negotiating stance, and alleged unfair trading relationship with Americans.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—With threats from the United States central to our federal election, Canadians would have been intrigued a few days ago when a Fox News interviewer asked President Donald Trump how come he's tougher on Canada than on America's "biggest adversaries." Without hesitation, the president responded: "Only because it's meant to be our 51st state."

Based on the time Trump spends talking about erasing the 49th parallel, Canadians have rightly begun to accept the idea that the reinstalled U.S. president is serious. His initial foray into this new-found imperialist mentality—when it comes to our country—emerged back on Jan. 7, when he allowed that he wouldn't take over his northern neighbour

using military power; only "economic force" would be employed in Canada's case. Unlike Panama or Greenland.

But Trump only occasionally talks about Panama or Greenland, and, even with Mexico—the main source of U.S. drug and migrant irritants—he almost never talks about that country in the same belligerent, dishonest, and vengeful way that he talks about Canadians.

One gave up on the prospect of rational thematics from this White House sometime before Christmas. But you still have to wonder what Trump is actually thinking about when it comes to Canada. Is it stream-of-consciousness freelancing juiced up by visions of America's ever greater role on the continent and the world, or just his way of keeping Canadians off balance for future trade negotiations?

There's little doubt that Trump thinks Canada would be a handy addition to the U.S., what with our vast land mass, the potential elimination of Alaska's stranded geography, the increasingly important security role of the Canadian Arctic, and our resources. The president has talked a lot, for example, about overhauling the 61-year-old Columbia River Treaty to benefit western American states. And he clearly recognizes the value of Alberta oil imports, to which he would apply lower tariffs.

What is particularly worrisome is the way Trump's frothing about Canada being illegitimate echoes Russian leader Vladimir Putin's phoney justification for

trying to wipe Ukraine from the face of the Earth.

We might get a better idea of how far the Trump administration will go in its aggressive moves on Canada next week when the president unveils his confrontation with the rest of the world through "reciprocal tariffs"—a moment all MAGA will supposedly celebrate—on April 2.

That new round of import taxes is intended to raise tariffs against countries whose trade policies—including higher respective tariffs—are considered unfair by the U.S. administration.

As usual, however, the timing and scope of this round of import taxes appears up in the air, according to U.S. business media. Amid this confusion, comments by senior Trump economic aides have led some political leaders in other countries—including some Canadians—to think that after the president lauds his major tariff victory on April 2, the U.S. might be willing to negotiate exemptions or lower tariffs. Mexico is clearly hoping for such a break after April 2, and China has expressed a willingness to join in trade talks with Trump.

We'll see how that evolves. But it's beyond troubling that Canada is always being singled out for its supposedly nasty negotiating stance, and alleged unfair trading relationship with Americans. In actuality, of course, Canada's trade surplus with the U.S. is the result of its oil imports, whose interruption would result in the shuttering of U.S. refineries in the Midwest. Canada's dairy supply management system, which

Trump is always railing about, is a symbolic issue of almost zero real trade significance. And when it comes to any need for the U.S. to put reciprocal tariffs on our exports, Canada—as a signatory of the Canada-U.S.-Mexico free-trade deal—already has very low tariffs.

With Americans increasingly nervous about living in the president's surreal tariff world, a climb-down by Trump on the issue would indeed seem inevitable. But he has so far been unmoved by declines in everything from the stock market to his popularity ratings. And, crazily, Trump appears to be thinking very long-term, going so far as to say that Americans need to look at things, like the Chinese do, in 100-year time frames. He could change his mind, of course, but for now he appears to believe the U.S. must try to get even with all the countries whose exporters have benefitted from decades of rampant American consumerism.

And Canada, despite its low-tariff trade partnership with Washington, is still reportedly a target on April 2. Maybe Trump will try to punish Canada over its HST, which the White House considers an unfair trade barrier. Or maybe for Ottawa's digital tax on U.S. tech giants. Or lumber. Or cars.

One way or the other, Trump seems unlikely to soon give up on his promise to wreck the economy of the land he now deems the U.S.'s worst enemy.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.
The Hill Times

The NDP is dithering on the fringes of survival

This election, the NDP is fighting to survive, therefore it can't do anything for us.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



CALGARY—The NDP has a love affair with losing. Although the Conservatives are fumbling the bag, New Democrats have no bag to fumble.

On March 23, Prime Minister Mark Carney presented Governor General Mary Simon with advice to dissolve Parliament, which she approved. In other words, we have an election—the one we've all been waiting for since Justin Trudeau's resignation on Jan. 6. Since United States President Donald Trump's victory last November, we've been inundated with his threats to economically cripple Canada. This election is a test to determine who voters trust as credible opposition to Trump. Unfortunately for the NDP, they have had no credibility as a party since their historic gains in the Orange Wave of 2011. In other words, the NDP has delusions of competence while embracing loserish behaviour.

Let's be honest, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh is a wasteman.

This election, the NDP is fighting to survive; therefore, it can't do anything for us. It appears the public agrees. Singh kicked off his campaign in Montreal and only about 100 people showed up; most of them were young volunteers already on NDP campaigns. As reported by CBC News, "the New Democrats' popularity has fallen to its lowest level in decades," polling under 12 per cent, that it "could lose roughly three-quarters of its 24 seats in the House of Commons." I didn't realize they had as many as 24 seats. They may even lose official party status, which requires 12 seats in the House of Commons. Imagine losing half of your parliamentary representation, and thinking you can save someone from drowning when you can't even tread water. What a joke.

In early campaign remarks, Singh positioned himself as our saviour who will fight for us against millionaires and billionaires, and reductions in social services. He looks like he's speaking to high school students, trying to

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COMMENT

2025 ELECTION

A new book highlights the bond between Quebecers and Les Canadiens

Although the Montreal Canadiens have fewer Quebecers than in the past, it continues to be the standard-bearer of French Canada.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



Brendan Kelly's *Le CH et son peuple* was published on Oct. 10, 2024. Image courtesy of Les Éditions de l'Homme

KAMOURASKA, QUE.—Each week there is a ritual in the dressing room of my “Cinquante-Cinq plus” (fifty-five plus) Oldtimers hockey group in nearby La Pocatière, Que. As we put on our equipment, there is discussion of the last Montreal Canadiens game. Every highlight is the subject of extensive study before we head out on the ice, and later in a local restaurant.

Currently, *Les Canadiens* are taking a shot at a playoff spot through the NHL “wild card”

system. With a young team filled with budding young stars like Nick Suzuki, Cole Caufield, and Lane Hutson, and backstopped with veterans like Mike Matheson and David Savard, there are dreams of playoff glory.

Across Quebec, hockey is a secular religion. For generations of Québécois, the Canadiens repre-

sented their aspirations in Canada. Since its founding in 1909, the team showcased the skills of players who were mostly francophone. And even though the team has fewer Quebecers today than in the past, it continues to be the standard-bearer of French Canada.

Seventy years ago, on March 17, 1955, Montreal fans exploded in anger when their hero, Maurice “Rocket” Richard, was suspended for attacking Hal Laycoe of the Boston Bruins and punching a linesman. The riot caused \$100,000 in damage, and was interpreted as the awakening of Quebec nationalism.

No wonder, then, that a journalist would write a book about the connection. But rather than a hard-line *indépendantiste*, the task was taken by a bilingual anglophone, Brendan Kelly of *The Montreal Gazette*. The title of the book, *Le CH et son peuple*, says it all: the “people” is “Les Québécois.” At present, the book is only available in a very accessible French, but an English version, *Habs Nation*, will be coming out in the fall.

As Kelly tells it, the book came out of a documentary film project with Quebecor’s Aetios Productions, which will be broadcast in June. “I pitched Aetios owner

Michel Trudeau on the idea, and he is a big hockey fan.”

As a result, Kelly had access to some of the greatest ever Montreal Canadiens: Serge Savard, Bob Gainey, Chris Nilan, and Scotty Bowman. He also spoke to political figures and historians like Philippe-Antoine Lupien, who describes the Richard Riot as “an extremely important affirmation in the collective imagination.” The book focuses as much on culture and politics as the action on the ice.

Parti Québécois Leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon, who named his son after Richard, told Kelly the Canadiens should emphasize Quebec nationalism and independence. “I would like to see a club like FC Barcelona, which embraces the destiny of the population ... and doesn’t try to reconcile the official message of the federal regime.”

In fact, Kelly notes the success of the Canadiens is connected to Quebec content, with 15 Stanley Cups won by teams featuring more than half of its players from Quebec. Author Emmanuel Lapierre says, “It is because the Canadiens players believe they represent Quebec.”

The Canadiens won the Cup in 1986 and 1993, and had suc-

cess in 2021, when in the midst of COVID-19, they made the finals and lost to the Tampa Bay Lightning. No longer the “Flying Frenchmen” with only a handful of Québécois, stars like Caufield and Suzuki should make the effort to learn French, as Gainey and Larry Robinson did in the past, Kelly said.

“While players didn’t learn French because they were here for a year or two, many current players have long-term contracts. Particularly Suzuki, because as captain of the Montreal Canadiens, he can’t communicate directly with young francophones.”

The paradox of the Canadiens’ connection to Quebec nationalism is they are also beloved across Canada. Canadiens great Jean Béliveau told me the team represented the best of Canada, bringing English and French together. Kelly said their enormous popularity outside Quebec may be connected to times when there were only two Canadian NHL teams: Toronto and Montreal. “If your parent was a Habs fan, you are, too.”

The federal election campaign will take place during the NHL playoffs. Given the American threat of President Donald Trump, the hockey post-season may resemble war by other means. If the Habs make the grade, Canadiens jerseys will be standard garb for politicians of all stripes campaigning in Quebec.

Andrew Caddell is retired from *Global Affairs Canada*, where he was a senior policy adviser. He previously worked as an adviser to Liberal governments. He is a town councillor in Kamouraska, Que. He can be reached at pipton52@hotmail.com.

The Hill Times

The NDP is dithering on the fringes of survival

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persuade them to get involved in politics. His slogans sound like they belong at a university students’ rally. Even his declaration to run to be the prime minister of Canada made me snort my morning coffee out of my nose. He talked about the party’s accomplishments of pushing the Liberal government to legislate dental care and pharmacare at the end of the *Toronto Star* clip, when some people have already scrolled by after 30 seconds.

I don’t know what the NDP stands for or how it will improve the lives of the average Canadian stuck in a cycle of financial affliction. They have constructed a point of view that consists of dithering around the edges of the centre while using progressive language. Singh is mealy mouthed and unreliable—one time he’s talking about millionaires and

billionaires as the enemies of the people, the next he’s doing drive-bys with a shortage of ammunition. He never specifies what the party will do about levelling the economic playing field besides taxing the one per cent. As Drew Nelles wrote in *The Walrus*: “He hasn’t come up with a vision for the party that is sufficiently bold or clear enough to differentiate it from the Liberals. And he appears unable to decide whether to take the party to the left or make a play for the mushy middle.”

Singh and the NDP are scared to be the progressive, left-wing party the country needs.

Despite Carney’s popularity, right-wing populism is on the rise. In fact, Carney may make it worse with his insistence on neoliberal hallucinations of grandeur. The country has no left-wing representation despite what centrists say—imagine thinking Trudeau was too left. It is the NDP that

should be occupying that space with cohesive policies and sophisticated messaging. They could champion the welfare state, such as endorsing social services that Canadians need. Paid leave, labour rights, civil rights, diversity, and health care are areas at which successive Conservative and Liberal governments have chipped away. They have gained public buy-in by pitting people against each other, communicating to everyone that their compatriots don’t deserve help or “their money.” Meanwhile, those same governments have systematically transferred public money to private enterprises, only benefitting a small group of people. Instead, the NDP has lost the working class to the Conservatives and has lost climate change, diversity, and childcare—for example—to the Liberals.

The NDP has a history of taking Ls because they are afraid



New Democrat Leader Jagmeet Singh and his party are scared to be the progressive, left-wing champions the country needs, writes Erica Ifill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

of being the true social conscience of the country. They’ve let themselves be hindered by criticism that Singh is too “other,” too wishy-washy, too weak, and too indecisive to lead the party. Canada is apparently looking for strong, white, male leadership, however, there is a large pro-

portion of Canadians who are politically rudderless because the NDP has exhibited no progressive leadership. If they cannot serve a wide-open left with their whole chest then they should hang it up.

Erica Ifill is a co-host of the *Bad+Bitchy* podcast.

The Hill Times

Does the military have room to get its elbows up?

Sadly for patriotic Canadians, the majority of the military hardware that the government does purchase is from American defence companies.

Scott Taylor



Inside Defence

OTTAWA—As United States President Donald Trump continues to target Canada with threats of annexation, Canadians are finally realizing that this is no longer a joke. Trump has described Canadians as “the nastiest” negotiators in a recent interview on Fox News.

His brazen threats to use economic measures, such as his trade-war tariffs, to force us into becoming the 51st state are in essence a declaration of war. Hell, Trump thinks he is being benevolent by allowing that we could keep *O Canada* as our state anthem, and he advocates that we elect hockey legend Wayne Gretzky as our future governor.

This turn of events is something no one could have envisioned even two short months ago. Canadians have reacted to Trump’s threats and insults through such means as publicly booing the American anthem at sporting events.

The rally cry of “Elbows up!” has now become synonymous with Canadians’ will to resist in the coming tariff war, and there is a brisk trade nationwide in merchandise emblazoned with the slogan “Canada is Not For Sale.” In Quebec, the slogan reads “*Le Canada n’est pas à vendre*,” but I digress.

No one even dares to whisper what options would be available for the Canadian Armed Forces if this spat escalates beyond the realm of words and financial penalties.

However, defence, and Canada’s lack of defence spending are at the forefront of Trump’s disdain for the country. Sadly for patriotic Canadians, the majority of the military hardware that the government does purchase is from American defence companies.

In a perfect world, Canada could boost actual defence spending while simultaneously turning those tax dollars to a country other than the U.S. We could hit Trump where it counts most—in the pocket book.

In fact, one of the first directives issued by newly sworn-in Prime Minister Mark Carney was to Defence Minister Bill Blair, instructing him to search for an alternative to the Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter planes.

During his March 17 visit to the United Kingdom and France, Carney also asked British and French officials about the possibility of either of those countries building a fighter jet in Canada. This would be a huge blow to Lockheed Martin and the U.S. defence industry.

In 2022, following a competition, the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) selected the F-35 as the replacement aircraft for their aging fleet of CF-18 fighter jets. The Trudeau Liberals announced they would purchase a total of 88 F-35s at a total purchase cost of \$19-billion.

However, in December 2022, Canada issued a \$7-billion contract for the acquisition of the first 16 F-35s. The first of these RCAF aircraft are to be delivered in 2026, with the F-35s becoming fully operational around 2032. So with Canada only under contract for 16 F-35s, it would seem a simple solution would be to cancel the order for the remaining 66 planes and stick it to Lockheed Martin—and by extension Trump—for close to \$12-billion. While that might enrage our American neighbours, it turns out it is not so simple to walk away from the U.S. military industrial complex.

The runner-up in the competition to replace the CF-18s was the Saab Gripen fighter jet. As part of its original proposal, Saab offered to assemble the Gripens in Canada, which would create jobs in the country’s aviation sector. For the record, the F-35s are built and assembled in the U.S.

In the RCAF competition, the Gripen also scored better than the F-35 when it came to long-term maintenance costs.

So it should be a no-brainer for Canada to pivot away from the F-35, purchase the Gripens, create Canadian jobs, and save money in the long run, right? Think again.

It turns out that any possible alternatives to the F-35 aircraft contain large quantities of U.S. technology. In the case of the Gripen, it is the engines—the Americans still hold the Trump card in this game.

As such, if pushed with an F-35 cancellation, the U.S. could in fact block us from obtaining fighters from any another source.

Similarly, the U.S. control of military technology extends to the new Canadian Surface Combatant ships being constructed by Irving Shipbuilding. Originally, those 15 River-class destroyers were to be outfitted with a Canadian-developed command system, called the CMS-330. But instead, the Liberal government approved the use of an American radar and command system—AEGIS—giving the U.S. full control over a critical capability for the Canadian fleet.

Back in December 2020, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported that Canadian defence industry officials had previously warned Jody Thomas, then-deputy minister at DND, and Bill Matthews, then-deputy minister at the procurement department, about the potential dangers of U.S.-controlled technology, and the lack of domestic content onboard the Canadian Surface Combatants. But those concerns were dismissed by department officials. That was then, and this is now.

It is going to be pretty difficult for the Canadian Armed Forces to get their “elbows up” since our previous military and defence leadership ensured that the U.S. has our arms firmly pinned.

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

The Hill Times

Gaming out the first period



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, left, and U.S. President Donald Trump are two factors who may help shape an outcome for this election, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade and courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Some important things could be revealed over the course of the first two weeks of the 45th election campaign.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—Canada’s 45th general election has begun. While not always the case, the first two weeks of this campaign will set the tone in determining whether this is indeed one of the most consequential elections of our time. That is the hype. The pre-billing. By the time we get to April 28, will those expectations have been met?

There are a number of things to watch for in the first 14 days. First, how does Liberal Leader Mark Carney fare in only his second political campaign and his first-ever as a Liberal candidate who also happens to be leading his party? Does he get into a groove, or to use hockey metaphors—a favourite of his—does he have some early bad shifts which throw off him and his team? He’ll make mistakes, but can he limit and manage them, not compound them? He needs the momentum he received coming out of the Liberal leadership race and his 10-day pre-election prime ministership to continue. If he falters early, that could be the game; but if he hits his stride, he would be the author of an epic political story.

Foreign interference in Campaign 45 will be easy to see coming from the south. Any time United States President Donald Trump opens his mouth and flaps his gums about Canada, he has the ability to shake up the election. He seems to enjoy that. From potentially whacking us—or not—with tariffs on April 2, to giddily dreaming of a 51st state, Trump has the potential to throw more curve balls into Canadian poli-

tics. His destabilization has already rocked our political firmament.

Will there be more from Alberta Premier Danielle Smith or other actions from premiers that affect the flow of things? Though she denies it, Smith, according to reports, allegedly told Trump’s administration to let the campaign play out and he might get a more like-minded leader. Whether true or not, in these early days of the election it has taken on a life—one in which a Canadian premier is encouraging a foreign leader to act in a particular way to help shape an outcome. Call it what you want, but it’s not helpful to anyone, specifically the federal Conservatives. And it’s not helpful at a time when national unity is vital.

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre—already a strong campaigner—also needs a good start. He will want to move Canadians’ focus from mostly south of the border back to Canada, and remind voters that fixing the affordability problem he says the Liberals created is what they need to address. The direct connection he established with key voting cohorts on issues like housing, low taxes, and the price of things has become distracted. Can he get them to see his light? He will also want to limit his own mistakes, and avoid falling victim to own goals from his team. Every party has them in elections. Poilievre will want to make sure those from his side are less spectacular.

Finally, paging the NDP. Do you have a pulse? Are you going to be wedged out, which will most likely benefit the Liberals, or rise in some places, which will help the Conservatives? While in the past, Leader Jagmeet Singh has been viewed as a good campaigner, right now—with some regional exceptions—is anyone willing to give the NDP the time of day? Is Singh the last relic of the Justin Trudeau era for which people have already rendered a negative verdict?

Between now and April 7—the first period of this big game—some important things could be revealed.

Tim Powers is chairman of *Summa Strategies*, and managing director of *Abacus Data*. He is a former adviser to Conservative political leaders.

The Hill Times

NEWS

Change is in the air: number of MPs not reoffering highest in last 25 years

Roughly 18.6 per cent of incumbent MPs aren't running for re-election this year, and the reasons why are varied.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

With 63 MPs now not running for re-election, this year will see the highest number of incumbents standing down in the last 25 years of federal elections.

Experts point to a number of likely contributing factors for this year's stats, from the recent redistribution effort that saw riding boundaries across Canada redrawn, to electoral expectations and changes in party leadership, fatigue following the COVID years, and the rising tide of hyperpartisanship and hate that MPs have to contend with today.

At 63 MPs as of March 24, that means almost 18.6 per cent of incumbents won't be returning for the next Parliament, and with five new seats being added as a result of the riding redistribution coming into effect this election, at minimum 68 seats—or about 19.8 per cent of the soon-to-be 343-member House—will be filled by newly elected MPs.

Most recently, on March 21, former Liberal ministers Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Ont.) and Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Alta.) announced they would not be seeking re-election. The same day, Conservative MP Richard Lehoux (Beauce, Que.) announced he wouldn't be running, and Liberal MP Chandra Arya



Five-term Liberal MP Kirsty Duncan, who recently battled cancer, has announced she won't seek re-election. Screenshot courtesy of Parlvu

MPs not running again, by election year

Five of the 63 MPs represented in this list served previous terms as an MP. The year listed in this chart is the election in which their most recent tenure began.

Year Term Started	Number of MPs
1988	1
1997	1
2004	2
2006	1
2008	5
2013	3
2015	34
2017	2
2019	9
2020	1
2021	4

(Nepean, Ont.) said the party had revoked his nomination and barred him from running. By March 24, Conservative MPs Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, Alta.) and Larry Maguire (Brandon-Souris, Man.) had also announced similar decisions.

Proportionally, this year also ranks first in terms of the portion of the existing House that didn't reoffer, beating out 2015—when 57 MPs, or 18.5 per cent of the House, didn't run again—and 2004, when 54 MPs opted not to run for re-election, representing roughly 18 per cent of the then-301-member House. In terms of the proportion of the next Parliament that's guaranteed to be new, this year is tied for second with 2004 at 19.8 per cent, and behind 2015, when 30 new seats were added to the Chamber, guaranteeing 25.7 per cent of the next Commons was new.

All three top years were elections in which federal riding redistribution came into effect. In 2004, seven new seats were added to the Chamber, bringing it from 301 to 308, while 30 new ridings were in play in 2015, bringing the House to 338 seats.

All three years also saw new party leaders in play: 2004 was the first election fought by today's Conservative Party under then-leader Stephen Harper, and the first with Paul Martin and Jack Layton helming the Liberals and NDP, respectively; and 2015 was now-former prime minister Justin Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.) first as Liberal leader.

Fred DeLorey, a former Conservative Party strategist, argued "one of the real driving forces"

behind this year's numbers is "the feeling of change" that's in the air in Ottawa, and the feeling that the "government of the past is done."

"A lot of government MPs, they don't want to sit in opposition, and then there's been some opposition MPs, too, that have been around for a long time and know they may not have a role in government, so they decide to get out now as well. So, it's when change is in the air you see that sort of big number of retirements," said DeLorey, who is currently chief strategy officer with NorthStar Public Affairs.

DeLorey said "there's no question" that redistribution is also a "big" factor this year. "You have people who no longer live in their ridings, or you have issues where there could be two sitting Parliamentarians ... with claims to the same riding, which causes issues," he said.

Of the 63 incumbents not reoffering this election, 34 had been sitting in the House since 2015—three of those being MPs who had previously been elected, and lost, but returned for another run in 2015. Nine had been in the House since 2019, including one who had served a previous term as an MP, while four were elected in 2021 (including one returning MP), one in a 2020 by-election, two in 2017 byelections, and three in 2013 byelections. Another five MPs of the 59 were first elected in 2008, with one from the class of 2006, and two from 2004. Outgoing Liberals John McKay and Lawrence MacAulay were the longest serving of the bunch, having first been elected in 1997 and 1988, respectively.

Ontario has the largest share of seats in the House of Commons, followed by Quebec and British Columbia. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, the largest share of MPs not reoffering this year come from Ontario, at 19, followed by Quebec with 14, and British Columbia with eight. Another six MPs not reoffering represent ridings in Alberta,

Margins of victory for MPs not running again

This chart breaks down the 2021 margin-of-victory ranges for each of the 63 MPs who are not running for re-election this year.

2021 Margin of Victory Range	Number of MPs
0-5%	8
5-10%	11
10-15%	12
15-25%	12
25-40%	14
Above 40%	6

while five are from Newfoundland and Labrador; three from New Brunswick; two each from Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba; and one each Prince Edward Island and the Northwest Territories.

Historically going back to the 2000 election, the pattern is similar, with the largest share of MPs who opted not to reoffer coming from Ontario, followed by Quebec, and then B.C.

Zita Astravas, a former cabinet chief of staff and senior staffer in Trudeau's office as prime minister, noted the hard toll public life can take on MPs and their families, and the particularly rough time experienced as a result of COVID-19.

"A lot of these parliamentarians served during COVID, which was an extremely hard time for all Canadians, but also a very complex time for parliamentarians of all political stripes," she said. "Many of these MPs have served over 10 years, and it's a natural point of reflection."

She agreed that redistribution similarly forces some natural reflection for MPs. "In some cases the riding only changes a little bit, but sometimes you're running in a completely, almost wholly new riding, which is a whole new constituency and community that you didn't necessarily represent [before]," said Astravas, who is now a vice-president with Wellington Advocacy.

Speculation has been swirling over the timing of the next federal election for more than a year now, with long-standing expectations that it would be called at some point before the mandatory date of Oct. 20, 2025. For much of that time, public opinion polling had the Conservatives under Pierre Poilievre, running for re-election in



Ontario Liberal MP Pam Damoff announced her decision not to seek re-election in May 2024. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



With 63 incumbents not returning and five new seats being added, about 19.8 per cent of the next of House of Commons is guaranteed to be newly elected MPs. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Carleton, Ont., leading by generous margins—a lead that has narrowed since Trudeau announced his intent to resign as Liberal leader at the beginning of January.

Broken down by party affiliation, 39 of the 63 MPs not reoffering are Liberals, while 13 are Conservatives, five are Bloc Québécois, five are NDP MPs, and one—Alain Rayes (Richmond-Arthabaska, Que.)—is an independent.

"People want to get out when they think their government is finished," said DeLorey. For Liberals, "they've been in government for nine years; they're tired," he argued. "They also see the writing on the wall."

Looking at the results of the last federal election, the spread is relatively even between the different margin-of-victory ranges for the 63 MPs not reoffering this year. Eight were elected—or re-elected—in 2021 by a margin of five percentage points or less, while 11 won by margins between five and 10 percentage points. Another 12 won by a margin of 10 to 15 percentage points, 12 by 15 to 25 percentage points, and six by generous margins of more than 40 percentage points.

Another notable factor is the online vitriol and public anger that MPs experience today—circumstances that Liberal Pam Damoff (Oakville North-Burlington, Ont.) specifically cited in announcing her decision not to seek re-election back in 2024.

"The threats and misogyny I have experienced as a Member of Parliament are such that I often fear going out in public, and that is not a sustainable or healthy way to live," she wrote in her statement, which also called out hyperpartisanship, and the effect of misinformation spread by politicians on the public's trust in institutions.

Samara Canada CEO Sabreena Delhon said from exit interviews the centre has conducted with former parliamentarians, and its efforts to monitor online abuse received by election candidates, it's clear that both candidates and elected officials "receive very high volumes of abuse online."

"It's a condition of work, and we also know that there's toxicity and incivility within the workplace, so to speak, as well, and it is turning

people away from serving in office," she said.

Delhon argued in favour of the need to dive into the stats of who is retiring whether they're going to miss the vitriol that they receive online, I don't think any of them would say that's something they're going to miss," said Astravas. "It's gotten increasingly nasty, personal, and menacing without a doubt, and across party lines ... for some, that

MPs not running in the next election

The following MPs have announced—as of March 24—they will not seek re-election this year.

Name	Party	Riding	2021 share of vote	Margin of victory
Ken Hardie	Liberal	Fleetwood-Port Kells, B.C.	45.20%	14.40%
Lloyd Longfield	Liberal	Guelph, Ont.	42.10%	18%
Joyce Murray	Liberal	Vancouver Quadra, B.C.	43.60%	14.70%
Omar Alghabra	Liberal	Mississauga Centre, Ont.	54.20%	26%
Anthony Rota	Liberal	Nipissing-Timiskaming, Ont.	38.80%	7%
Emmanuel Dubourg	Liberal	Bourassa, Que.	60.40%	41.70%
Tony Van Bynen	Liberal	Newmarket-Aurora, Ont.	43.80%	5.50%
Pam Damoff	Liberal	Oakville North-Burlington, Ont.	46.80%	8.80%
John McKay	Liberal	Scarborough-Guildwood, Ont.	61.10%	39.80%
Ken McDonald	Liberal	Avalon, N.L.	50.10%	15.80%
Michael McLeod	Liberal	Northwest Territories	38.20%	5.90%
Seamus O'Regan	Liberal	St. John's South-Mount Pearl, N.L.	56.20%	32.80%
Francis Drouin	Liberal	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Ont.	46.10%	12.70%
René Arseneault	Liberal	Madawaska — Restigouche, N.B.	55.20%	29.30%
Yves Robillard	Liberal	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Que.	44.10%	13.30%
Filomena Tassi	Liberal	Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, Ont.	44.30%	15.40%
Carla Qualtrough	Liberal	Delta, B.C.	42.30%	8.40%
Dan Vandal	Liberal	Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Man.	43.80%	15.70%
Brenda Shanahan	Liberal	Châteauguay—Lacolle, Que.	37.00%	0.02%
Marie-Claude Bibeau	Liberal	Compton—Stanstead, Que.	36.70%	6.10%
Sean Fraser	Liberal	Central Nova, N.S.	46.20%	13.90%
Marco Medicino	Liberal	Eglinton-Lawrence, Ont.	48.50%	12.00%
Gudie Hutchings	Liberal	Long Range Mountains, N.L.	44.40%	5%
Yvonne Jones	Liberal	Labrador, N.L.	42.70%	12.30%
Justin Trudeau	Liberal	Papineau, Que.	50.30%	27.60%
Jenica Atwin	Liberal	Fredericton, N.B.	37.03%	1.14%
Harjit Sajjan	Liberal	Vancouver South, B.C.	49.40%	29.80%
Soraya Martinez Ferrada	Liberal	Hochelaga, Que.	38.10%	6.50%
Arif Virani	Liberal	Parkdale-High Park, Ont.	42.50%	3.20%
Mary Ng	Liberal	Markham-Thornhill, Ont.	61.50%	35.20%
Darrell Samson	Liberal	Sackville-Preston-Chezetcook, N.S.	41.30%	14.90%
Pascale St-Onge	Liberal	Brome-Missisquoi, Que.	35.00%	0.30%
Lawrence MacAulay	Liberal	Cardigan, PE	50.60%	19.70%

"I don't think if you ask any parliamentarian on the Hill who is retiring whether they're going to miss the vitriol that they receive online, I don't think any of them would say that's something they're going to miss," said Astravas. "It's gotten increasingly nasty, personal, and menacing without a doubt, and across party lines ... for some, that

might be the motivating factor; for others, that might be part of the decision matrix."

After the top three years, the next highest number of MPs not to reoffer was seen in 2019, when 44 incumbents didn't seek re-election, followed by 33 heading into the 2008 election, 31 for the 2021 election, 21 for both the 2000 and 2006

elections, and 17 heading into the 2011 election, based on data from the Library of Parliament.

The 'problem of amateurism'

Acadia University professor Alex Marland, author of *Whipped: Party Discipline in Canada* and the forthcoming book *No I in Team: Party Loyalty in Canadian Politics*, said having fewer experienced hands and more fresh faces in Parliament can change dynamics—both within the House and within a caucus—and offer more opportunity for party leadership to exert control.

"The real problem is when you lose people with institutional knowledge, or people who are safe in their seats—they're the ones who are comfortable pushing back or challenging things," said Marland.

"It's just been, really, in the last 15 years or so that there's been much more co-ordination of messaging, and a lot less tolerance of people saying their own thing" on the part of party leadership, he said.

A contributing factor to the House's turnover rate is the "number of minority governments that have been occurring" this century,

as more minority Parliaments mean "more elections," added Marland.

"In political science, this has been dubbed a long ago as a 'problem of amateurism.' And because there's so much turnover, Canada's Parliament—or specifically the House of Commons—is known for its amateurism. There's just not enough people who've been there long enough," he said, noting the job of an MP is one that can take "many years to be able to master," and that even for two-term MPs, it can be "hard to get much accomplished."

On the flip side, Marland said turnover of the old ranks creates "more opportunities for women" and "for a greater diversity of candidates" overall.

"If everybody was constantly reoffering and staying in place, it'd be really hard to shove out those white men who have occupied the positions for so long. So, that's a positive about the change," he said. "The challenge, of course, is what's happening is people are coming in, and even though they themselves represent different perspectives and stories, the reality is that the party still ends up consuming them."

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Name	Party	Riding	2021 share of vote	Margin of victory
Marcin Ien	Liberal	Toronto Centre, Ont.	50.40%	24.40%
Churence Rogers	Liberal	Bonavista-Burin-Trinity, N.L.	46.60%	5.60%
Mark Holland	Liberal	Ajax, Ont.	56.80%	30.20%
Chandra Arya	Liberal	Nepean, Ont.	45.10%	11.40%
Kirsty Duncan	Liberal	Etobicoke North, Ont.	58.90%	33.40%
Randy Boissonnault	Liberal	Edmonton Centre, Alta.	33.70%	1.30%
Gary Vidal	Conservative	Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River, Sask.	48.80%	21.90%
Ron Liepert	Conservative	Calgary Signal Hill, Alta.	59%	40.40%
Ed Fast	Conservative	Abbotsford, B.C.	47.90%	23.70%
Robert Kitchen	Conservative	Souris-Moose Mountain, Sask.	76.40%	67.30%
Colin Carrie	Conservative	Oshawa, Ont.	39.70%	11.20%
Karen Vecchio	Conservative	Elgin-Middlesex-London, Ont.	49.90%	30.40%
Earl Dreeshen	Conservative	Red Deer-Mountain View, Alta.	64.20%	50.30%
Martin Shields	Conservative	Bow River, Alta.	69.80%	59.80%
Gerald Soroka	Conservative	Yellowhead, Alta.	66.20%	53.40%
Jake Stewart	Conservative	Miramichi—Grand Lake, N.B.	43.70%	4.50%
Richard Lehoux	Conservative	Beauce, Que.	48.30%	30.10%
Len Webber	Conservative	Calgary Confederation, Alta.	46%	17.50%
Larry Maguire	Conservative	Brandon Souris, Man.	59.60%	39%
Charlie Angus	NDP	Timmins-James Bay, Ont.	35.10%	7.90%
Carol Hughes	NDP	Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing, Ont.	40.20%	12.70%
Rachel Blaney	NDP	North Island-Powell River, B.C.	39.50%	3.60%
Richard Cannings	NDP	South Okanagan-West Kootenay, B.C.	41.30%	5.90%
Randall Garrison	NDP	Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke, B.C.	42.80%	20.70%
Jean-Denis Garon	Bloc Québécois	Mirabel, Que.	46.50%	23%
Monique Pauzé	Bloc Québécois	Repentigny, Que.	51.70%	24%
Louise Chabot	Bloc Québécois	Thérèse-De Blainville, Que.	41.20%	6.00%
Stéphane Bergeron	Bloc Québécois	Montarville, Que.	45.30%	10.50%
Kristina Michaud	Bloc Québécois	Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, Que.	59.80%	38.30%
Alain Rayes	Independent	Richmond-Arthabaska, Que.	49.90%	25.10%

Barring access to Tory leader's tour will limit coverage, but the press gallery will find a way, say journos

The Conservatives' decision breaks with foundational precedent 'to observe and ask questions,' says World Press Freedom Canada's Heather Bakken.

BY STUART BENSON

Despite the Conservative Party promising to stage "one of the most accessible and transparent campaigns in recent memory," its decision to bar journalists from travelling with its leader's tour will only further deepen divisions between politicians and the journalists who cover them, says a political communications expert.

And while the choice is an apparent attempt by the Conservatives to tightly control the media and its messaging, it is unlikely many journalists or their outlets will be playing along, said Alyson Fair, a director with World Press Freedom Canada (WPFC) and a former senior producer for CTV's *Power Play*.

"I don't think you'll have one press gallery member who will accept their [the Conservatives'] video because it's not from a media source," explained Fair, now a senior consultant with Bluesky Strategy Group, referring to the party's offer to provide a live feed for broadcasters to use in place of the traditional pool cameras. "It comes from their source, so they can manipulate it in any way, shape, or form they want."

In a March 18 email, the Conservatives' national campaign director Jenni Byrne informed journalists they would not be allowed on board party buses and planes with Tory Leader Pierre Poilievre, who is running for re-election in Carleton, Ont., while covering his campaign.

Byrne, a key adviser since Poilievre's bid for party leadership in 2022, wrote that as travel costs have "risen considerably," so has "the capacity for digital and remote access at public events," leading to more outlets opting to deploy resources from their closest bureau rather than pay for a journalist to travel with the campaign.

For the past several decades, in previous general elections, news outlets have paid political parties for travel, food, and access to filing rooms or, more recently, Wi-Fi while travelling on leaders' tours. The cost of an entire campaign for a single reporter can rise into the tens of thousands of dollars.

The NDP and Liberal Party have confirmed they will allow



Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre launched his election campaign with a press conference in Gatineau, Que., on March 23, but unlike his competitors, journalists were left to catch their own ride when he set off for his next stop in Toronto. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

journalists to travel with their leaders during the 45th general election. The fees for those campaigns will rise above \$30,000 for each journalist covering the entire campaign, plus the cost of accommodations, which are not included.

"We would like to assure you that this will be one of the most accessible and transparent campaigns in recent memory," Byrne wrote, highlighting the steps the party would be taking to ensure journalists could still participate in Poilievre's public events in-person or remotely.

Byrne wrote that the campaign would provide two to three days advance notice on event locations, full conferencing services for media availability to ensure "an equitable balance" between local and national media, resources at the Conservatives' Ottawa campaign office to co-ordinate travel and resource logistics, and a Dejero live feed for use by news broadcasters.

While the press gallery has neither commented nor taken an official position on the matter, individual member outlets, including *The Hill Times*, have decided not to incorporate any party-provided media into their coverage.

The CBC's parliamentary bureau chief Chris Carter told *The Hill Times* it remains "crucially important" for journalistic organizations to "do our own news gathering for public events."

"[CBC News] will be working with our pool partners to get cameras to all the Conservative events, along with our reporters," Carter wrote in a statement.

During Poilievre's first two press conferences, he has taken a total of nine questions from reporters, primarily from national outlets.

During his March 23 press conference in Gatineau, Que.,

Poilievre took 12 minutes of questions, responding to five reporters, including two questions in French from *Le Devoir* and Radio-Canada, and three from CBC News, *The Globe and Mail*, and *The Toronto Star*, answering each in both French and English.

The following day, during his press conference in Brampton, Ont., Poilievre allocated another 16 minutes to answering four questions, in both languages, from *The Globe and Mail*, CBC News, *The Toronto Sun*, and a remote question from TVA.

While many in the press gallery had expected such a decision by the Conservatives, that resignation to the inevitable did little to soften the reaction when the decision finally came.

Press gallery reporters and bureau chiefs who spoke with *The Hill Times* on background expressed a near-unanimous lack of surprise in the decision, and a similar lack of confidence in the party's rationale and consolations.

Veteran Hill reporter Glen McGregor, now covering federal politics for CityNews Toronto, posted on social media that despite expecting the decision, it was "still bizarre to hear."

"The response from all credible media, I expect, will be to not use any video handed out by the CPC campaign," McGregor wrote.

"The press gallery had been expecting this but still bizarre to hear: the Conservatives will not allow journalists to travel (at their expense) on the CPC campaign plane."

Appearing on a panel during the March 20 episode of CBC News' *Power and Politics*, *La Presse*'s Joel-Denis Bellavance told host David Cochrane that the decision was a "big mistake" the

press gallery had "pleaded" with the Conservatives not to make.

Bellavance said that outlets who still choose to send journalists to follow Poilievre's campaign would spend as much time booking transportation and hotels as they would reporting the news.

The Globe and Mail's Robert Fife described the decision as "anti-democratic" in its attempt to limit reporters' ability to put Poilievre "to the test."

"[W]e are not going to be able to follow the ebb and flow of this campaign and explain to people when he's doing a good job and when he's in trouble, or when the campaign seems to be on the rise or when it's sinking," Fife said. "You can't do that driving around in a car from one event to another."

Fife also called the Conservatives' attempt to justify the decision over rising travel costs an outright "lie."

"We pay our own way," Fife said, adding that "responsible news organizations ... will pay whatever it costs to cover these election campaigns."

Mia Rabson, deputy bureau chief for The Canadian Press, said her organization would do everything it could to cover the campaign, but some events would undoubtedly be missed, alongside the ability to quickly get Poilievre's reaction should some unforeseen crisis or significant event break during the campaign.

"If something seriously happens, it may be a day before we'll get to Poilievre," Fife noted.

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, Rabson, who also serves as Parliamentary Press Gallery president, wrote that while the gallery's constitution does not define its role outside of Parliament specifically, "its members play a critical role in a free and fair election, bringing trustworthy and reliable news coverage to Canadians."

"This requires regular access to pose questions to every party about their platforms, in spaces both on and off Parliament Hill," Rabson wrote.

In an interview with *The Hill Times*, Heather Bakken, WPFC president, said the Conservatives' decision breaks with a foundational precedent of press freedom.

"The right to observe and ask questions is a foundational right to the values and principles of our democracy," said Bakken, a former journalist and publisher at *iPolitics*, adding that accommodating the shared press pool is a "healthy" part of that democracy.

"What you're getting are experienced people on the ground to make sure the people of Canada can see what's going on at rallies, at town halls, during meetings, on the streets with people," Bakken said, noting that the Conservatives' insistence on providing their own visual resources is an

attempt to displace the traditional network pool.

As for the Conservatives' rationale for the decision, Bakken said the advance-notice window is unrealistic as leaders' tours will inevitably need to make quick scheduling pivots to respond to various issues on the ground.

Additionally, Bakken noted that while the Conservatives vowed to balance local and national media, she questions how they would achieve that given the increased shuttering of smaller local news outlets in recent years.

According to the Local News Research Project, an organization monitoring the decline of community journalism, as of this past February, 526 local publications have shut down in 351 communities across Canada since 2008. While 406 new outlets were launched in that time, only 278 are still operational, a net loss of 248.

Bakken said the move is another step away from press freedom and toward political control, an attitude she said is not unique to the Conservatives.

"We have to ensure Canadians trust that what they're seeing is reliable and accurate, and that it has been delivered with neither fear nor favour," Bakken said. "If you want to have a level playing field, there are precedents that have worked effectively in the past, but this is one area that is not broken, so if it's not broken, there's no need to fix it."

Alex Marland, a political scientist at Acadia University and Jarislowsky Chair in Trust and Political Leadership, called the decision a "sign of the times," as a similar move would have been a mortal mistake for any campaign just a decade ago.

While technology and rising costs have increased the feasibility of remote coverage, the move is unsurprising given the general decline in the relationship between the Conservative Party and the journalists that cover it, Marland said.

"It would have been odd for them to go around saying they want to defund the CBC and then have CBC reporters on their bus or plane," Marland explained, noting that despite the animosity, it was still disappointing to see the Conservatives not leave room for at least a pool reporter and camera.

"I don't see why they couldn't have found a way to accommodate a pool reporter," Marland said.

However, Marland also agreed that the decision could benefit journalists. He said he suspects outlets will find other ways to cover a frontrunner campaign while being liberated from the confines of the leader's itinerary.

"One of the downsides of these leaders' tours is they've just become rote ... are you really missing out by not having to hear the leader repeat the same message at every single stop?" Marland questioned, adding that when Poilievre does have something new to say, "if they [the party] think it's important, they will find a way to say it in a way that accommodates the media."

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Politicians, start your engines: the campaign kickoff



Prime Minister Mark Carney holds a press conference outside Rideau Hall after asking the Governor General to dissolve Parliament and call an election on March 23. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Carney confirmed Canadians will be going to the polls at the end of the 37-day campaign on April 28. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre got a head start on the prime minister, holding a morning press conference at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Que., on March 23. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



Poilievre arrived at his presser with 'fighter-pilot' son, Cruz, left, wife Anaida, and daughter Valentina. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh got the ball rolling with an event at the Westin Ottawa on March 23. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



Singh's family—wife Gurkiran Kaur Sidhu, left, and daughters Anhad and Dani—joined in for the campaign launch event. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Carney later announced he will be running in the Ottawa riding of Nepean, Ont. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Local NDP candidates joined Singh for the campaign kickoff in Ottawa at the Westin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



The Liberal Party media bus loads up at Rideau Hall after Carney's press conference, taking the team to his first campaign stop in St. John's, N.L. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Cruz and Anaida Poilievre take a quiet moment during the Conservative leader's press conference. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

NEWS

New riding map gives Tories slight boost compared to 2021 election



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, left, Liberal Leader Mark Carney, and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh will contend with a new 343-riding contest in the federal election. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

The Conservatives could have won seven extra seats if the 2021 election had been contested using the 2025 electoral boundaries, though it would not have been enough to deny the Liberals minority government.

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

The House of Commons will play host to five more MPs following the 2025 election compared to the 44th Parliament, as Canadians vote in a red-distributed map that is slightly more favourable to Conservatives than the one contested in 2021.

Canadians are split among 343 ridings this election, up from the 338 that have been contested since the 2015 election. Transposed Elections Canada data shows that, if the 2021 election had been contested in the new ridings, Conservatives would boast seven more MPs, and the Bloc Québécois would have picked up an extra two seats.

The Liberals would have two fewer seats in the transposed map, while the NDP would lose one. The Green Party would retain its two seats.

In good news for the Grits, however, the party would have picked up a single seat in Saskatchewan—a province which has only elected Conservatives federally since 2019.

That means that the Liberals are going into the election nominally holding the northern Saskatchewan riding of Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, despite having lacked representation in the Land of Living Skies for almost six years.

Though the changed boundaries would not have affected the overall outcome of the 2021 election—the Liberals would still govern in a minority Parliament, and the NDP would retain the numbers necessary to enter a supply-and-confidence agreement with the governing party—the data provides insights into the new electoral calculus each of the parties must consider during this election campaign.

Alberta has picked up three of the five new ridings, with Ontario and British Columbia receiving one each. Quebec was initially due to lose one seat, but legislation was passed in 2022 requiring that no province would lose representation compared to the 2012 redistribution.

The Hill Times has collected the Elections Canada data and created tables—as well as a map—showing the new ridings, the party whose candidate would have

been elected to the riding in 2021, their percentage of the vote and winning margin, and the runner-up party.

These lists come with some caveats. The data does not include the results of the 11 byelections held during the 44th Parliament. The Liberal Party data for the former riding of Spadina—Fort York, Ont., are the votes for Kevin Vuong, who appeared on the ballot as the Liberal candidate, although he lost the party's endorsement two days before the election.

These lists also include only the party names, not those of candidates, as some ridings have changed substantially or been abolished to be consumed by neighbouring ridings.

Consider the former riding of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasung, Ont., which has been incorporated into the ridings of Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma, Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkewgowuk, and Thunder Bay—Superior North. Further south, federal minister Anita Anand's riding of Oakville, Ont., has been split into Oakville East and Oakville West.

Only 48 ridings are unchanged between the 2021 and 2025 elections: the three territory seats; 24 in Quebec; 15 in Ontario; and three in British Columbia. Labrador, N.L., Cumberland—Colchester, N.S., and Lethbridge, Alta., are the sole unchanged ridings in their respective provinces.

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2025 ELECTION

Contest recontextualized: the 2021 results in the new boundaries

Riding	Winning Party	Winning Margin	Vote %
Alberta			
Airdrie—Cochrane	Conservative	44.97%	59.90%
Battle River—Crowfoot	Conservative	61.68%	71.38%
Bow River	Conservative	59.72%	69.57%
Calgary Centre	Conservative	20.85%	50.92%
Calgary Confederation	Conservative	17.80%	45.69%
Calgary Crowfoot	Conservative	33.25%	54.94%
Calgary East	Conservative	34.32%	52.86%
Calgary Heritage	Conservative	41.05%	58.32%
Calgary McKnight	Liberal	9.54%	43.76%
Calgary Midnapore	Conservative	41.73%	60.27%
Calgary Nose Hill	Conservative	35.09%	55.32%
Calgary Shepard	Conservative	45.17%	61.20%
Calgary Signal Hill	Conservative	40.43%	59.81%
Calgary Skyview	Conservative	11.84%	44.96%
Edmonton Centre	Conservative	1.39%	32.60%
Edmonton Gateway	Conservative	17.70%	43.12%
Edmonton Griesbach	NDP	4.05%	40.36%
Edmonton Manning	Conservative	10.11%	41.12%
Edmonton Northwest	Conservative	15.47%	43.10%
Edmonton Riverbend	Conservative	20.51%	45.44%
Edmonton Southeast	Conservative	3.70%	37.70%
Edmonton Strathcona	NDP	31.18%	57.95%
Edmonton West	Conservative	21.10%	45.62%
Foothills	Conservative	57.03%	68.43%
Fort McMurray—Cold Lake	Conservative	55.11%	67.81%
Grande Prairie	Conservative	57.11%	68.96%
Lakeland	Conservative	58.34%	69.40%
Leduc—Wetaskiwin	Conservative	45.77%	63.37%
Lethbridge	Conservative	36.34%	55.65%
Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner	Conservative	51.90%	65.80%
Parkland	Conservative	46.81%	63.09%
Peace River—Westlock	Conservative	49.49%	62.65%
Penoka—Didsbury	Conservative	54.52%	67.87%
Red Deer	Conservative	43.15%	60.51%
Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan	Conservative	36.91%	57.55%
St. Albert—Sturgeon River	Conservative	32.48%	56.03%
Yellowhead	Conservative	45.57%	60.23%
British Columbia			
Abbotsford—South Langley	Conservative	19.54%	45.59%
Burnaby Central	NDP	8.53%	39.78%
Burnaby North—Seymour	Liberal	14.32%	40.88%
Cariboo—Prince George	Conservative	30.77%	51.17%
Chilliwack—Hope	Conservative	19.57%	45.99%
Cloverdale—Langley City	Liberal	2.98%	39.10%
Columbia—Kootenay—Southern Rockies	Conservative	6.98%	43.62%
Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam	Liberal	7.80%	37.92%
Courtenay—Alberni	NDP	11.57%	42.88%
Cowichan—Malahat—Langford	NDP	14.43%	42.78%
Delta	Liberal	9.00%	42.54%
Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke	NDP	21.35%	43.23%
Fleetwood—Port Kells	Liberal	17.40%	45.93%
Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies	Conservative	19.98%	45.01%
Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola	Conservative	14.94%	43.50%
Kelowna	Conservative	16.07%	42.31%
Langley Township—Fraser Heights	Conservative	14.34%	43.92%
Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford	Conservative	22.91%	47.12%
Nanaimo—Ladysmith	NDP	2.79%	29.38%
New Westminster—Burnaby—Maillardville	NDP	24.55%	47.98%
North Island—Powell River	NDP	3.24%	39.46%
North Vancouver—Capilano	Liberal	15.31%	44.69%
Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna	Conservative	25.13%	48.35%
Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge	Conservative	5.85%	37.14%
Port Moody—Coquitlam	NDP	3.08%	35.04%
Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies	Conservative	44.96%	59.33%
Richmond Centre—Marpole	Liberal	3.12%	38.58%
Richmond East—Steveston	Liberal	7.92%	41.91%
Saanich—Gulf Islands	Green	13.12%	35.77%
Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay	NDP	1.39%	38.97%
Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP	6.44%	42.58%
South Surrey—White Rock	Conservative	3.54%	42.44%
Surrey Centre	Liberal	17.07%	44.63%
Surrey Newton	Liberal	28.35%	54.43%
Vancouver Centre	Liberal	10.33%	40.67%
Vancouver East	NDP	36.64%	56.40%
Vancouver Fraserview—South Burnaby	Liberal	11.22%	42.32%
Vancouver Granville	Liberal	4.31%	37.23%
Vancouver Kingsway	NDP	21.38%	50.40%
Vancouver Quadra	Liberal	14.17%	43.39%
Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee	Conservative	22.11%	43.83%
Victoria	NDP	16.64%	43.90%
West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	Liberal	3.91%	33.05%
Manitoba			
Brandon—Souris	Conservative	38.98%	59.37%
Churchill—Keewatinook Aski	NDP	17.39%	42.56%
Elmwood—Transcona	NDP	20.67%	49.12%
Kildonan—St. Paul	Conservative	14.54%	42.45%
Portage—Lisgar	Conservative	30.27%	52.15%

Contest recontextualized: the 2021 results in the new boundaries (continued)

Riding	Winning Party	Winning Margin	Vote %
Manitoba (continued)			
Provencher	Conservative	30.85%	48.34%
Riding Mountain	Conservative	44.68%	59.19%
Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman	Conservative	37.55%	56.97%
St. Boniface—St. Vital	Liberal	15.61%	43.90%
Winnipeg Centre	NDP	20.70%	49.65%
Winnipeg North	Liberal	25.46%	53.21%
Winnipeg South	Liberal	15.45%	48.15%
Winnipeg South Centre	Liberal	17.17%	45.29%
Winnipeg West	Conservative	1.10%	40.35%
New Brunswick			
Acadie—Bathurst	Liberal	51.11%	64.96%
Beauséjour	Liberal	36.11%	55.54%
Fredericton—Oromocto	Liberal	3.28%	37.79%
Fundy Royal	Conservative	20.74%	46.33%
Madawaska—Restigouche	Liberal	24.22%	51.99%
Miramichi—Grand Lake	Conservative	8.46%	45.46%
Moncton—Dieppe	Liberal	27.24%	49.67%
Saint John—Kennebecasis	Liberal	6.21%	42.60%
Saint John—St. Croix	Conservative	18.93%	47.00%
Tobique—Mactaquac	Conservative	30.18%	52.83%
Newfoundland and Labrador			
Avalon	Liberal	17.83%	50.88%
Cape Spear	Liberal	31.60%	54.72%
Central Newfoundland	Conservative	0.88%	46.89%
Labrador	Liberal	12.32%	42.67%
Long Range Mountains	Liberal	5.03%	44.39%
St. John's East	Liberal	10.30%	45.14%
Terra Nova—The Peninsulas	Liberal	6.81%	47.26%
Nova Scotia			
Acadie—Annapolis	Conservative	20.62%	51.31%
Cape Breton—Canso—Antigonish	Liberal	10.33%	45.43%
Central Nova	Liberal	11.45%	44.30%
Cumberland—Colchester	Conservative	11.82%	46.02%
Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Liberal	18.54%	51.50%
Halifax	Liberal	1.95%	42.24%
Halifax West	Liberal	21.56%	47.55%
Kings—Hants	Liberal	14.15%	44.39%
Sackville—Bedford—Preston	Liberal	19.66%	44.65%
South Shore—St. Margarets	Conservative	7.82%	43.39%
Sydney—Glace Bay	Liberal	7.76%	41.93%
Ontario			
Ajax	Liberal	30.23%	56.83%
Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke	Conservative	28.55%	49.50%
Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Liberal	2.64%	44.76%
Barrie South—Innisfil	Conservative	18.78%	47.67%
Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Conservative	15.37%	45.79%
Bay of Quinte	Conservative	3.57%	40.59%
Beaches—East York	Liberal	34.05%	56.58%
Bowmanville—Oshawa North	Conservative	13.94%	44.75%
Brampton Centre	Liberal	16.90%	48.32%
Brampton East	Liberal	24.64%	53.19%
Brampton North—Caledon	Liberal	18.25%	51.44%
Brampton South	Liberal	24.42%	53.88%
Brampton West	Liberal	28.57%	56.29%
Brampton—Chinguacousy Park	Liberal	19.80%	50.81%
Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations	Conservative	12.35%	40.08%
Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Conservative	23.95%	49.18%
Burlington	Liberal	8.48%	45.73%
Burlington North—Milton West	Liberal	11.30%	47.89%
Cambridge	Liberal	4.10%	38.24%
Carleton	Conservative	19.99%	51.86%
Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Conservative	15.70%	42.43%
Davenport	Liberal	4.03%	43.60%
Don Valley North	Liberal	20.23%	52.77%
Don Valley West	Liberal	27.32%	57.23%
Dufferin—Caledon	Conservative	20.42%	49.04%
Eglinton—Lawrence	Liberal	12.03%	48.48%
Elgin—St. Thomas—London South	Conservative	29.60%	49.25%
Essex	Conservative	9.31%	40.96%
Etobicoke Centre	Liberal	14.04%	48.14%
Etobicoke North	Liberal	33.44%	58.88%
Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Liberal	14.67%	47.14%
Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North	Conservative	11.25%	43.78%
Guelph	Liberal	17.92%	41.37%
Haldimand—Norfolk	Conservative	19.87%	47.39%
Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes	Conservative	28.11%	51.97%
Hamilton Centre	NDP	20.23%	46.96%
Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	Liberal	8.95%	39.07%
Hamilton Mountain	Liberal	2.94%	34.50%
Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas	Liberal	15.23%	44.30%
Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga	Conservative	11.11%	45.58%
Humber River—Black Creek	Liberal	43.29%	60.69%
Huron—Bruce	Conservative	24.76%	50.93%
Kanata	Liberal	6.31%	43.16%
Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk	NDP	9.57%	35.79%
Kenora—Kiiwetinoong	Conservative	14.18%	43.32%
King—Vaughan	Conservative	1.96%	44.86%
Kingston and the Islands	Liberal	11.89%	40.69%
Kitchener Centre	Green	8.53%	33.37%

Riding	Winning Party	Winning Margin	Vote %
Kitchener South—Hespeler	Liberal	1.91%	37.45%
Kitchener—Conestoga	Liberal	0.65%	38.29%
Lanark—Frontenac	Conservative	23.86%	49.69%
Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes	Conservative	25.33%	50.53%
London Centre	Liberal	7.17%	37.55%
London West	Liberal	2.72%	36.87%
London—Fanshawe	NDP	19.23%	43.50%
Markham—Stouffville	Liberal	16.80%	51.55%
Markham—Thornhill	Liberal	35.15%	61.54%
Markham—Unionville	Liberal	5.80%	48.23%
Middlesex—London	Conservative	18.10%	45.25%
Milton East—Halton Hills South	Liberal	0.46%	41.71%
Mississauga Centre	Liberal	25.03%	53.88%
Mississauga East—Cooksville	Liberal	18.67%	50.28%
Mississauga—Erin Mills	Liberal	17.68%	51.19%
Mississauga—Lakeshore	Liberal	6.43%	45.01%
Mississauga—Malton	Liberal	21.89%	52.68%
Mississauga—Streetsville	Liberal	13.02%	47.34%
Nepean	Liberal	12.37%	45.74%
New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury	Conservative	17.40%	47.67%
Newmarket—Aurora	Liberal	5.62%	43.78%
Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake	Conservative	2.23%	37.42%
Niagara South	Conservative	0.45%	33.41%
Niagara West	Conservative	12.98%	44.03%
Nipissing—Timiskaming	Liberal	4.98%	36.86%
Northumberland—Clarke	Conservative	9.97%	43.99%
Oakville East	Liberal	6.78%	46.22%
Oakville West	Liberal	9.02%	47.49%
Orléans	Liberal	23.67%	52.34%
Oshawa	Conservative	11.22%	39.71%
Ottawa Centre	Liberal	12.53%	45.24%
Ottawa South	Liberal	22.45%	49.41%
Ottawa West—Nepean	Liberal	17.75%	45.42%
Ottawa—Vanier—Gloucester	Liberal	25.74%	49.00%
Oxford	Conservative	26.11%	46.79%
Parry Sound—Muskoka	Conservative	26.28%	47.93%
Perth—Wellington	Conservative	23.93%	48.55%
Peterborough	Conservative	4.37%	39.19%
Pickering—Brooklin	Liberal	13.90%	48.16%
Prescott—Russell—Cumberland	Liberal	14.81%	47.22%
Richmond Hill South	Liberal	9.07%	47.83%
Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong	Conservative	25.51%	46.50%
Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma	Conservative	3.23%	35.59%
Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East	Liberal	30.99%	56.32%
Scarborough North	Liberal	48.89%	66.98%
Scarborough Southwest	Liberal	37.36%	57.96%
Scarborough—Agincourt	Liberal	27.07%	56.24%
Scarborough—Guildwood—Rouge Park	Liberal	39.22%	61.28%
Scarborough—Woburn	Liberal	37.86%	60.41%
Simcoe North	Conservative	11.35%	42.18%
Simcoe—Grey	Conservative	19.54%	47.42%
Spadina—Harbourfront	Liberal	4.39%	38.23%
St. Catharines	Liberal	5.50%	37.87%
Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry	Conservative	29.61%	54.32%
Sudbury	Liberal	6.08%	34.98%
Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt	Liberal	1.65%	31.98%
Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park	Liberal	4.40%	42.79%
Thornhill	Conservative	15.66%	51.72%
Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Liberal	4.98%	34.26%
Thunder Bay—Superior North	Liberal	12.69%	40.40%
Toronto Centre	Liberal	23.59%	49.83%
Toronto—Danforth	Liberal	14.69%	48.36%
Toronto—St. Paul's	Liberal	23.00%	49.51%
University—Rosedale	Liberal	18.41%	46.48%
Vaughan—Woodbridge	Liberal	5.88%	46.15%
Waterloo	Liberal	18.04%	45.48%
Wellington—Halton Hills North	Conservative	16.53%	46.78%
Whitby	Liberal	10.61%	45.09%
Willowdale	Liberal	17.34%	51.19%
Windsor West	NDP	16.46%	44.24%
Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore	Liberal	0.58%	30.88%
York Centre	Liberal	9.44%	47.29%
York South—Weston—Etobicoke	Liberal	33.10%	55.58%
York—Durham	Conservative	23.25%	51.75%
Prince Edward Island			
Cardigan	Liberal	19.65%	50.57%
Charlottetown	Liberal	15.64%	46.70%
Egmont	Liberal	14.90%	45.94%
Malpeque	Liberal	8.89%	42.02%
Quebec			
Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	Bloc Québécois	11.96%	37.92%
Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Bloc Québécois	26.50%	50.61%
Ahuntsic-Cardierville	Liberal	29.28%	51.91%
Alfred-Pellan	Liberal	21.13%	47.71%
Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation	Liberal	6.36%	39.16%
Beauce	Conservative	30.10%	48.29%
Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon	Bloc Québécois	21.02%	48.32%
Beauport—Limoulu	Bloc Québécois	0.52%	31.06%
Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel—Alnôbak	Bloc Québécois	37.90%	54.80%

Riding	Winning Party	Winning Margin	Vote %
Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis	Conservative	29.24%	52.00%
Beloeil—Chambly	Bloc Québécois	30.10%	53.53%
Berthier—Maskinongé	Bloc Québécois	3.25%	35.93%
Bourassa	Liberal	41.69%	60.39%
Brome—Missisquoi	Liberal	0.32%	34.96%
Brossard—Saint-Lambert	Liberal	34.16%	54.10%
Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	Conservative	20.39%	45.02%
Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville	Bloc Québécois	0.08%	36.59%
Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Conservative	6.30%	40.37%
Compton—Stanstead	Liberal	6.15%	36.66%
Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomiq—Témiscouata	Conservative	15.08%	44.88%
Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan	Bloc Québécois	30.80%	52.63%
Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle	Liberal	36.51%	52.23%
Drummond	Bloc Québécois	27.84%	46.62%
Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj	Bloc Québécois	4.58%	44.34%
Gatineau	Liberal	26.64%	50.05%
Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est	Liberal	7.02%	38.43%
Honoré-Mercier	Liberal	43.71%	59.99%
Hull—Aylmer	Liberal	36.36%	52.46%
Joliette—Manawan	Bloc Québécois	32.85%	55.14%
Jonquière	Bloc Québécois	14.81%	43.11%
La Pointe-de-l'Île	Bloc Québécois	14.34%	46.66%
La Prairie—Atateken	Bloc Québécois	9.12%	43.73%
Lac-Saint-Jean	Bloc Québécois	25.64%	50.90%
Lac-Saint-Louis	Liberal	37.36%	56.26%
LaSalle—Émard—Verdun	Liberal	21.59%	43.42%
Laurentides—Labelle	Bloc Québécois	28.84%	52.31%
Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Liberal	9.08%	39.51%
Laval—Les Îles	Liberal	29.85%	48.93%
Les Pays-d'en-Haut	Bloc Québécois	21.65%	47.54%
Lévis—Lotbinière	Conservative	26.88%	49.70%
Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine	Liberal	5.16%	40.44%
Longueuil—Saint-Hubert	Bloc Québécois	2.88%	41.20%
Louis-Hébert	Liberal	11.21%	38.21%
Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrak	Conservative	31.90%	52.03%
Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Liberal	13.31%	44.11%
Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière	Conservative	37.10%	56.71%
Mirabel	Bloc Québécois	21.43%	45.82%
Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie	Bloc Québécois	11.37%	45.49%
Montcalm	Bloc Québécois	33.24%	53.22%
Montmorency—Charlevoix	Bloc Québécois	2.82%	36.70%
Mount Royal	Liberal	33.34%	57.41%
Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount	Liberal	32.76%	52.83%
Outremont	Liberal	17.06%	44.36%
Papineau	Liberal	27.62%	50.30%
Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères	Bloc Québécois	28.41%	54.26%
Pierrefonds—Dollard	Liberal	35.18%	56.01%
Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi	Liberal	22.46%	43.86%
Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Conservative	28.61%	52.35%
Québec Centre	Liberal	6.69%	35.72%
Repentigny	Bloc Québécois	23.23%	51.37%
Richmond—Arthabaska	Conservative	25.13%	49.88%
Rimouski—La Matapédia	Bloc Québécois	32.21%	54.30%
Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Bloc Québécois	5.18%	40.54%
Rivière-du-Nord	Bloc Québécois	29.13%	51.60%
Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	NDP	25.41%	48.57%
Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton	Bloc Québécois	24.77%	47.45%
Saint-Jean	Bloc Québécois	17.89%	46.01%
Saint-Laurent	Liberal	41.03%	59.35%
Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Liberal	59.14%	69.60%
Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Liberal	12.38%	42.45%
Shefford	Bloc Québécois	8.43%	41.92%
Sherbrooke	Liberal	8.52%	37.53%
Terrebonne	Bloc Québécois	12.03%	41.40%
Thérèse-De Blainville	Bloc Québécois	5.74%	40.94%
Trois-Rivières	Bloc Québécois	0.14%	29.49%
Vaudreuil	Liberal	26.51%	47.47%
Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs	Liberal	33	

OPINION



Prime Minister Mark Carney's first cabinet is nearly gender equal, which has become the new normal over the past decade, write Elizabeth McCallion and Rebecca Wallace. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Why gender parity matters in cabinet

Almost a decade of gender-balanced federal cabinets have paved the way for new women appointees.

Elizabeth McCallion & Rebecca Wallace



Opinion

Prime Minister Mark Carney's new, pared-down Liberal

cabinet comes close but does not quite maintain a convention established by his predecessor: gender parity. At 11 women and 14 men, his appointed team has strong women's representation but falls short of parity.

When former prime minister Justin Trudeau was first asked why he appointed a gender-equal cabinet, he responded: "Because it's 2015." After a decade of gender-equal cabinets, is this a standard that many Canadians have come to expect?

As political scientists, we've been researching how news media have covered the "gender-equal cabinet" throughout Trudeau's three terms as prime minister. Our preliminary results

suggest that Canadians have adjusted to the idea. Gender parity is increasingly becoming a yardstick by which cabinet appointments are measured.

There was significant media attention towards the first gender-equal cabinet in 2015. Some headlines expressed concern about gender displacing "merit." Over Trudeau's decade in office, the headlines were less likely to question cabinet ministers' merit with each cabinet shuffle.

The women in Trudeau's cabinets proved themselves to be competent leaders—and they paved the way for new women appointees. Gender-equal cabinets have become far less controversial over the last decade.

While some premiers also adopted parity cabinets—British Columbia's John Horgan in 2017, and Quebec's François Legault in 2019—even in the cases where they hadn't, journalists have been more inclined to take stock of women's representation and comment on the proportion of women in the highest halls of power.

According to Canadian news media, gender parity in cabinet has become the new normal.

Critics often claim we want cabinet ministers to be the people most qualified for the job, and not appointed just because of their gender. But this framing is flawed.

Often, the way we measure who is "most qualified" is skewed: it prioritizes access to certain types of post-secondary education and contact with elite networks that can help people get prestigious jobs. Women can have those advantages, too, but they tend to be more active than men in community work, school councils, advocacy groups, and charity groups—all types of work (paid or unpaid) that we don't often see as pathways into politics.

But someone who went to law school at an Ivy League university isn't automatically more qualified to serve in politics than someone with a teaching degree from a Canadian school. It depends on the job, the social context, and the personal characteristics of the candidates in question.

Our new prime minister is a case-in-point: Carney is the first prime minister never to have held political office before, but that is seen as an advantage in a climate where citizens are losing trust in politicians.

Smart, competent people occupy all walks of life, and many would make formidable cabinet ministers.

Research also shows that women do politics differently. They're more likely to bring attention to issues that affect

women, and more likely to push for women-friendly policies. The effect is exponential: as more women join politics, they stop being tokens and become the norm. They can then work in areas that interest them without being pigeonholed into dealing with "women's issues."

Men's behaviour in legislatures with more women shifts, too—those legislatures pay more attention to women's issues.

Ideas of "merit" are too often underpinned by elitist notions of what makes a good politician. The result is homogenous cabinets with everyone sharing similar backgrounds and points of view. Instead, gender parity in cabinets can allow diverse perspectives to be incorporated into government decisions.

Gender quotas do run the risk of elevating the most privileged women, leaving marginalized women behind. With that in mind, gender-equal cabinets should pay attention to the identities of the women—and men—they appoint, including factors like race, gender identity, sexuality, and disability, among others.

In Trudeau's words, we need "a cabinet that looks like Canada," now and in the future.

Carney's cabinet is nearly gender equal. Will that hold after the election? Will it continue to be viewed as a standard in Canada? We hope so.

Citizens have the power to reinforce change in our political system by changing our expectations. This means communicating to our leaders that we want—and expect—gender parity in cabinet.

Elizabeth McCallion is an assistant professor in the department of political science at the University of Toronto, and an affiliated researcher at the Gender and Politics Lab (GAPLab).

Rebecca Wallace is an assistant professor of political science, director of the GAPLab, and the Mila Mulroney Research Chair of Women and Politics at St. Francis Xavier University.

The Hill Times

A front-row seat to the end of an empire

Decisive and swift action is needed for Canada to extricate itself from the crumbling edifice of an empire while it still can.

Liberal MP John McKay



Opinion

The saying "empires crumble from within" seems tragically apt as we watch the American empire tear itself apart. The deep political divide between red and blue states is well documented, as is the corruption fuelled by vast sums of money flooding the electoral system. The enormous financial burden required to elect a senator or secure a congressional seat existed long before Elon Musk became President Donald Trump's bagman-in-chief.

Nonetheless, watching the dissolution of the American empire unfold in real time is both morbidly fascinating and distressing. Like a slow-motion

train wreck, the scale and speed of the destruction are startling, even to seasoned observers. Allies are no longer allies, and enemies are no longer enemies. The chief beneficiaries of America's decline are Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping. They can hardly believe their luck. Putin has received everything he could possibly dream of without even having to ask for it. Trump's personal grievances with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy have led him to undermine Ukraine, Europe, NATO, and the western world. Like his stance on tariffs, Trump either fails to understand

or refuses to acknowledge the destructive impact of his position. These are not deals requiring art, only artifice. As long as his loyal MAGA followers believe that tariffs and the collapse of Ukraine are beneficial to Americans, then "we love the deal."

America's hasty withdrawal from its key roles in Ukraine, NATO, and other western alliances has prompted a rush to the exits by those most affected. Europe and NATO are now contemplating the possibility of going it alone. Canada finds itself caught between a declining American empire and an emboldened, rising Russian empire led by a man who sees himself as a 17th- to 18th-century czar. His delusions are supported by the emerging Chinese empire, which—in the not-too-distant future—will be capable of dominating both the American and Russian empires. Putin's delusions are funded by China's rise.

What has brought Canada to this perilous state? While it's tempting to blame Trump, he's

far from alone in this. Though he garnered only 49 per cent of the popular vote last November, Trump and his supporters interpret it as a mandate for destruction. The incessant narrative that Canada is a source of drugs and terrorists serves as a smoke-screen, keeping everyone in a perpetual state of confusion. The claim that Canada is "ripping off" America through clever negotiations in the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement is equally implausible. While Canada's defence spending not yet meeting two per cent of GDP has some merit, it overlooks the deep and longstanding military and security ties between the two nations. The U.S. does not defend Canada out of altruism or goodwill—it does so because it is in its best interest. I recommend Tim Cook's book, *The Good Allies*, which explores this issue in greater depth and may go some distance in explaining Canadians' visceral

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Digesting the need to eliminate internal trade barriers on food



A lack of regulatory alignment and co-ordination between multiple levels of government drives up costs, reduces choice for consumers, and stifles investments across the entire value chain, write Jacques Shore and Suzanne Sabourin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

At a time of geopolitical uncertainty, addressing internal trade barriers to food is no longer an option; it is a necessity.

Jacques J.M. Shore & Suzanne Sabourin

Opinion



“We are masters of our own economic destiny. Canada is stronger when it is united, which is why we need to create one Canadian economy instead of 13.”

Those comments from Prime Minister Mark Carney during the Liberal leadership race and reiterated to media after his cabinet’s swearing-in will likely resonate for weeks, if not years to come as the unprovoked United States trade war with Canada has renewed the urgency to address the long-standing barriers that have fragmented the Canadian economy.

Internal trade barriers were addressed and emphasized as a priority in the 1985 Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada (The Macdonald Commission). This Commission was appointed in the aftermath of one of the most

turbulent periods of Canadian history. The lifting of internal trade barriers was a bonus to the pursuit of free-trade agreements to spur economic growth, and strengthen Canada’s resilience to external threats to our trading markets.

Intermittent efforts to eliminate Canada’s internal barriers to trade have not gone far enough. U.S. President Donald Trump’s actions have sparked serious discussion in Canada on new practical ways to bolster the Canadian economy. On Jan. 31, the federal government convened a Committee on Internal Trade (CIT) meeting to discuss measures aimed at eliminating barriers to internal trade. On March 5, the CIT ministers issued a statement affirming their commitment to promoting mutual recognition of goods and services, improving labour mobility, reducing exceptions to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, as well as launching pan-Canadian direct-to-consumer alcohol sales for Canadian products.

The CIT ministers have committed to move these initiatives forward swiftly and effectively, and to engage Canadian stakeholders in support of these efforts. These actions are expected to lower prices, boost productivity, and create new market opportunities for Canadian businesses, helping to offset the impact of U.S. tariffs and strengthen Canada’s economic resilience.

It has been estimated that removing these barriers could boost Canada’s GDP by as much as seven per cent, which could be worth \$200-billion to our economy.



Federal leadership in the Committee on Internal Trade should move quickly to establish a mutual recognition agreement, and new Internal Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland could play a role, write Jacques Shore and Suzanne Sabourin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

While helping Canadian businesses identify and access new opportunities for growth and resilience in the domestic market, agriculture and agri-food must be included. Food safety is a shared jurisdiction among the federal, provincial, and territorial levels of government in Canada. One would expect that food deemed safe for sale in Ontario would also be safe for sale across Canada. Unfortunately, this is not the way the system works in Canada. Instead, we have a system that is based on regulatory fragmentation, rather than regulatory alignment. Provincially licensed facilities can only sell exclusively within their province. Federally licensed facilities must navigate complex—and sometimes

redundant—regulatory hurdles to access domestic markets.

A lack of regulatory alignment and co-ordination between multiple levels of government drives up costs, reduces choice for consumers, and stifles investments across the entire value chain. At a time of geopolitical uncertainty, rising protectionism, and unjustified punitive tariffs, addressing internal trade barriers to food is no longer an option; it is a necessity. Food security depends on it.

Federal leadership in the CIT should move quickly to establish a mutual recognition agreement. The model already exists with the Food Safety Enhancement Program (FSEP) of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Perhaps the new minister respon-

sible for internal trade, Chrystia Freeland, can influence this as soon as possible. In any event, any new government would be wise to double down on such an initiative.

In addressing food affordability, Sylvain Charlebois, director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University, has found that multiple studies—including reports from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and the Competition Bureau—“estimate that eliminating interprovincial trade barriers could save Canadians up to \$9-billion annually on food alone—excluding potential savings in the restaurant sector.”

Canadian food manufacturers are perhaps the most vulnerable to tariffs being imposed on both sides of the 49th parallel because they move ingredients, semi-finished, and finished products across the border in a seamless supply chain. American tariffs on the importation of Canadian goods, and Canada’s dollar-for-dollar retaliatory tariffs do not result in any winners; only the contrary is true. Radically changing supply chains and ramping up production from non-U.S. sources can be prohibitively costly, face significant regulatory and technical barriers, and other practical hurdles.

In this context, trade diversification both within and outside Canada’s borders becomes critically important. We must be reminded of the Barton Report released in 2017, which provides a set of recommendations designed to increase annual agri-food exports to \$75-billion a year by 2027. The conclusions to address tariffs are as—if not more—relevant today as they were when first released. Canada has the opportunity to capture the position of breadbasket to the world in its effort to significantly increase our food production capabilities, and to do so in a sustainable and technologically advanced manner.

Trump’s oddly nationalistic and strange predatory trade policy has already reverberated globally, creating havoc and uncertainty in business activity by disrupting the flow of goods, services, and commerce. While regulatory alignment among the provinces is not a panacea, it remains a priority to support and reinforce non-tariff trade measures. Canada must embrace this moment to cut its own new path down this open field.

Regardless of which party forms the next federal government, Canada’s political leadership must remain steadfast in its commitment to eliminate the country’s internal economic barriers to trade in these challenging times, and to expand its export horizons abroad. Doing so will only benefit Canadians, and our planet.

Jacques J.M. Shore, C.M., is a partner at Gowling WLG, a member of the firm’s advocacy group, and past leader of the firm’s national government affairs practice. Suzanne Sabourin is counsel at Gowling WLG, and a member of the firm’s advocacy group, with a practice focusing on regulatory law and public policy.

The Hill Times

OPINION

A front-row seat to the end of an empire



Like his stance on tariffs, U.S. President Donald Trump either fails to understand or refuses to acknowledge the destructive impact of his position, writes John McKay. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/The White House

Continued from page 18

anger at the betrayal by an ally, friend, and partner.

Canada must extricate itself from the crumbling edifice of an empire while it still can. This requires decisive and swift action. During a recent trip to Washington, D.C., where we met with 20-25 senators and congressional representatives, we were told that the tariff war can only be slowed or derailed if it begins to hurt American consumers and businesses. Neither Democrats nor Republicans will challenge this insanity unless it starts affecting them. Republican voters did not sign up for higher grocery bills, fewer jobs, more layoffs, and increased shutdowns. For instance, American meat processors rely on Canadian products that cannot be easily replaced, which will inevitably lead to plant shutdowns, layoffs, and price hikes. A major Canadian airline reported that bookings to the U.S. are down 20-25 per cent. Trump has already scaled back potash tariffs because the powerful agricultural lobby has made it clear that fertilizer cannot be produced without potash. The alternatives are Russia or Belarus. Imperilling the food supply is a poor political strategy. The stock market reflects the chaos unleashed by Trump's policies. He takes credit when it rises, and blames "globalists"—whatever that means—when it crashes. He has a remarkable ability to claim success when it is not due and deflect blame when failure is evident.

If Canada's strategy is not to bend the knee or kiss the ring of subservience, Canadians must take several actions simultaneously. First, "buy Canadian" has

transitioned from a patriotic sentiment to an economic imperative. Grocery stores are already noticing and promoting the Canadian origin of their products. Increasing the purchase of Canadian products can help boost productivity and eliminate internal trade barriers, both of which have been on the to-do list for far too long. Prime Minister Mark Carney has made this a priority, advocating for a unified Canadian economy, rather than the fragmented provincial and territorial economies that currently exist.

We've talked endlessly about increasing defence spending, but this is no longer a "tomorrow" issue—it is a matter of sovereignty today. Canada must move more quickly toward the two-per-cent defence spending goal, and reduce its dependence on U.S. military procurement. Regardless of whether America's current political fever is temporary or permanent, Canada needs to assert its independence in this area. America seems intent on destroying its empire, which has been built over the last 80 years through alliances, economic interdependence, and shared security. Canada must inoculate itself against this wanton destruction.

Finally, Canada means many things to many people, but at the end of the day, all else must give way to the primary loyalty to the nation. Otherwise, Canada will be squeezed between the greed of the U.S. and the malevolent ambitions of the Russia-China axis.

John McKay is the Liberal Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Guildwood, Ont., and was Canadian co-chair of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group. *The Hill Times*

Closing Canada's border security gaps

The failure to recognize trafficking network links results in missed opportunities to dismantle entire criminal enterprises.

Laura Dawson

Opinion



Cross-border illicit trade is a persistent and costly challenge for Canada. Whether it is fentanyl, illegal tobacco, cannabis, counterfeit goods, or unauthorized migrants, the consequences of failing to stem the tide of smuggling operations are far-reaching. Future Borders Coalition examines this challenge in a March 2025 report on *Border Security, Technology, and Illicit Trade*.

Canada and the United States share one of the longest international borders in the world, but their approaches to border security and enforcement diverge significantly. The U.S. has invested heavily in advanced screening technologies, data analytics, and cross-jurisdictional collaboration, whereas Canada's efforts in these areas have been uneven and, in some cases, insufficient. If Canada is serious about tackling illicit trade, it must take a more comprehensive and proactive approach, leveraging technology, intelligence-sharing, and inter-agency co-ordination.

Criminal networks do not operate in silos. The same individuals trafficking illegal cigarettes are also part of networks moving drugs, people, weapons, illicit cash, stolen vehicles, and counterfeit consumer goods. Yet Canada's enforcement strategies tend to compartmentalize these issues, treating them as separate problems rather than interconnected components of a vast illicit supply chain. The failure to recognize these linkages results in missed opportunities to dismantle entire criminal enterprises.

Border technology: a critical weakness

Border officers are aware of the growth of illicit trade, and use available tools to flag suspicious shipments. However, limited resources and political barriers prevent them from accessing advanced AI-driven analytics. Without these tools, Canada's risk assessment remains reactive and outdated.

Cost concerns often justify this gap, but there's a strong business case for investment. Enhanced detection and enforcement would generate revenue through increased tax collection and civil forfeiture funds, offsetting technology costs.

The risk assessment dilemma

Balancing enforcement with trade facilitation is a major challenge. Inspecting every shipment is impractical and wastes resources on low-risk cargo. Instead, authorities need sophisticated risk assessment models to pinpoint high-risk shipments.

Historically, assessments were manual and reactive. Today, AI and big data allow for predictive analysis, flagging risks

before they reach the border. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Automated Targeting System does this effectively. Canada must expand its use of similar predictive models.

A political catalyst for change

For years, vulnerabilities in Canada-U.S. border security been managed behind closed doors. However, the recent election of U.S. President Donald Trump has pushed these problems out into the open, leaving Canada scrambling to cobble together feasible solutions to avoid costly trade actions. But this crisis also provides a window of opportunity for border and law enforcement reform.

Trump's border czar, Tom Homan, has put Canada on notice that any gaps that make the shared border more vulnerable to international criminal activity will be under a microscope. These have and will continue to attract penalties from the new U.S. administration in the form of tariffs and more. Said Homan: "It's an extreme national security vulnerability and it's one of the things I will tackle in the White House."

Cross-border crime—whether it is tobacco, drugs, or people smuggling—is not committed by petty thieves. These schemes are orchestrated by international criminal networks that take advantage of regulatory loopholes and weaknesses in Canada's investigation and enforcement regimes. Canada's best strategy is to tackle domestic weaknesses directly and commit to a proactive engagement with the U.S. through some form of new binational regime for border security to combat international criminal networks in our shared territory.

The path forward

To effectively combat illicit trade and strengthen border security, Canada must take an aggressive approach. This includes:

1. Investing in advanced screening technologies including non-intrusive imaging systems, AI-driven risk assessment models, and blockchain-enabled cargo tracking.

2. Strengthening risk-assessment models: utilizing data analytics and AI-driven insights to flag high-risk shipments will enhance efficiency without disrupting legitimate trade.

3. Enhancing intelligence sharing: stronger partnerships with U.S. agencies, and improved communication among federal, provincial, and local law enforcement will improve threat identification and mitigation.

4. Implementing policy reforms: legislators must ensure that Canada's border agencies have the legal frameworks necessary to act swiftly against emerging threats, including digital smuggling and e-commerce fraud.

Canada's border security strategy is at a crossroads. The increasing sophistication of criminal networks demands an equally sophisticated response. With political pressure mounting from the U.S., Canada has an opportunity—and an obligation—to modernize its approach to illicit trade. By embracing advanced technologies, fostering greater intelligence-sharing, and adopting a unified enforcement strategy, Canada can turn the tide against cross-border smuggling. Failure to do so will leave the nation vulnerable to ever-evolving threats, compromising public safety and economic stability.

Laura Dawson, PhD, is the executive director of the Future Borders Coalition. *The Hill Times*

Diplomatic Circles

By Neil Moss



Feta issue must crumble before Greek ratification of Canada-EU trade pact, says envoy

Greek Ambassador to Canada Ekaterina Dimakis says Ottawa is 'reluctant' to hand over a list of Canadian producers of feta cheese prior to CETA being in place.

Greece's top diplomat in Ottawa says a feta cheese designation has to occur before Athens can advance approval of Canada's trade pact with the European Union.

Greece is one of 10 EU members that still has yet to ratify the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) eight years after it was signed.

"CETA is an issue for us," Greek Ambassador to Canada Ekaterina Dimakis told *The Hill Times* in a March 18 phone interview.

Athens wants Canada to enforce a Greek designation for feta cheese products.

Dimakis said that protecting feta cheese is important for Greece due to its "particular identity."

"Feta is a particular type of cheese that is produced only in Greece. Any other cheese that is produced elsewhere and not in Greece is 'feta-type' or 'feta-style,'" she said. "We want the Canadian authorities and the market [to] follow that, so far it is not followed."

With both Canada and the European Union under tariff threat, some trade observers have said that now is the time to push for full ratification of the trade pact.

Dimakis said the American tariff imposition and continued threats have been a "wake-up call" for Canada.

"I believe now new prospects and possibilities occur for reinforcing, for strengthening, the relations between Canada and the European Union—as a whole—and individual countries," she remarked.

Bilateral Canada-Greece goods trade was \$585-million in 2023, according to Global Affairs Canada.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has called for a renewed focus on east-west trade links amid the American threats, including with Europe.

But calls for greater trade diversification and deepening trans-Atlantic co-operation have not been met with an appetite to move beyond the ingrained concerns for EU countries that have yet to fully ratify CETA.

While most of the pact is provisionally applied without full ratification, investment protections are excluded until all countries sign off.

French Ambassador to Canada Michel Miraillet previously told *The Hill Times* that movement on full CETA ratification in his country was unlikely for two years given domestic political calculations.

Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, and Slovenia also have yet to fully approve the trade agreement.

Feta 'most central' issue preventing CETA ratification, says ambassador

Dimakis said that Canadian cheese companies who were producing feta prior to CETA coming into place could still do so, but those that started afterwards must rename the product as "feta-type" or "feta-style" cheese.

She said that Canada is obliged to provide Greece with a list of Canadian cheese companies that were producing feta before CETA came into force.

"Canada is reluctant to produce [the list]," she said.

Dimakis said that solving the feta issue "will help a lot" for Athens to convince Greek producers and proceed towards an eventual full ratification of the agreement.

Discussions have been ongoing between Canada and Greece, the ambassador said, noting that there were two rounds of talks in the past year.

"It's very important to continue talking because I believe that through talking we can find solutions," she said. "We do appreciate that there is a will from the Canadian side to discuss and find solutions—we do the same in Greece."

"With goodwill and with continuation of talks and negotiations, we can find a way to proceed to the ratification," she said.

She described the feta issue as the "most central" one that is pending for Greece, but remarked that it is not the only one.

"It is the one that makes the producers in Greece really worried," she said.

Greece is not alone in calling for the designation of cheese to be solidified before ratifying CETA.

Cyprus wants halloumi recognized as a Cypriot product before it approves the pact.

Cheese has increasingly played an oversized role in spoiling trade talks in recent years. In 2024, the United Kingdom put a pause on trade talks with Ottawa after Canada was unwilling to grant continued access to the politically sensitive supply-managed domestic market.

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OPINION

Senate independence is a success that must continue

During this election, leaders competing to be prime minister should commit to preserve the Senate's independence from political parties.

PSG Senator Pierre Dalphond



Opinion

Since the 2015 election, the Senate of Canada has transformed from an echo chamber for the lines of the Liberal and Conservative parties into a valuable institution of sober second thought, as originally contemplated.

This transformation rests on a commitment made in 2015 by former prime minister Justin Trudeau to invite Canadians of all stripes to apply to the Senate, and to appoint only persons who have been recommended by an Independent Advisory Board. The 100 Senators appointed through the new system were all told that they were independent from the government. Most of them have since affiliated with either the Progressive Senate Group, the Canadian Senators Group, or the Independent Senators Group. These three recognized Senate parliamentary groups act independently from Canada's political parties, and don't caucus with them. Only the fourth recognized group, the Conservatives, caucuses regularly with Tory MPs, and follows the direction of their party leader.

Freed from party discipline, most Senators believe in an Upper Chamber that fulfills its constitutional duty of sober legislative review.

Since 2015, Senators successfully amended 22 per cent of government bills that received royal assent. Substantive amendments include: establishing an appeal process for the revocation of citizenship due to fraud; ending gender discrimination in Indian Act status; providing soybean farmers with equitable rail service; banning menthol cigarettes; expanding RCMP members' collective bargaining rights; upholding provincial jurisdiction over consumer protection in banking; re-writing Canada's access-to-information laws; and phasing out chemical testing on animals.

In contrast, during the 10-year tenure of then-prime minister Stephen Harper, Senators amended only seven per cent of government bills, often at the government's request. In fact, a top-down dynamic between the executive and the Senate then prevailed. In his 2016 *Duffy* decision, Ontario Court Justice Charles Vaillancourt described the then-PMO as ordering Senators around like "pawns on a chessboard," and senior Conservative Senators as "robotically marching forth to recite their provided scripted lines."

In addition, Senators have reviewed various aspects of the federal administration. Ministers now regularly appear in hour-long Senate Question Periods. Ministers and senior officials appear before committees to answer non-partisan questions about bills and departments.



Freed from party discipline, most Senators believe in an Upper Chamber that fulfills its constitutional duty of sober legislative review, writes Sen. Pierre Dalphond. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

On transparency and accountability, today's Senate is televised, Senators' expenses are proactively disclosed, a modern harassment policy is in place, and an Audit and Oversight Committee with external membership has been established.

In terms of representation, the new Senate has near gender parity, with 53 per cent women, and Senators from diverse backgrounds and walks of life. Today's Senate has about 10 per cent Indigenous membership. In 2020, the late senator Murray Sinclair said: "The government's Senate policies have ... advanced reconciliation by giving a greater voice to many of Canada's founding peoples in Parliament and federal law-making. This change is a reminder that such representation should always have occurred, and should always continue in the future, including with access to an open and arm's-length appointment process."

It is true that many Senators appointed under the new system tend to hold progressive values. However, the current Senate also features a group led by a Harper appointee that includes former Conservative Party Senators and many others appointed by Trudeau. In my view, it is important to maintain a diversity of political views in the appointment process.

Canadians are starting to appreciate the new Senate. A 2024 poll sponsored by Senator Donna Dasko showed that seven in 10 Canadians want to keep the independent appointment process. Only five per cent support a return to the old partisan appointment system, and its well-documented flaws.

During this election, although the Senate won't be a pressing issue, I invite the Liberal and Conservative party leaders competing to commit to preserve its independence from political parties. For the Liberal Party, it means continuing a reform that has been constitutional and workable. For the Conservative Party, a good start would be to repeat the decision of then-prime minister R.B. Bennett in the 1930s to remove Conservative senators from caucus meetings. It would signal that the party listens to the desire of Canadians to have an upper legislative chamber that is worth the cost and not a prestigious place to appoint party supporters.

The Hon. Pierre Dalphond is an independent senator for De Lorimier, Que., and leader of the Progressive Senate Group.
The Hill Times

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

Where are they now? Catching up with more ex-staffers



The Centre Block building on Parliament Hill. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

For one, Tyler Norman, a former senior policy adviser to then-deputy PM and finance minister Chrystia Freeland, is now chief of staff to B.C. Finance Minister Brenda Bailey.

Ex-staffers have already begun flooding the job market, with high turnover resulting from the recent change in prime ministers and slimming down of the cabinet, and from the recent election call.

So, what better time than now to look at where other former staffers have landed since bidding farewell to Parliament Hill?

Topping the list of arguably the most interesting post-Hill moves is that of Tyler Norman, who was a senior policy adviser to now-Transport and Internal Trade Chrystia Freeland as then-deputy prime minister and finance minister up until her—temporary, it turns out—resignation from cabinet at the end of 2024.

Norman is now working for the NDP government in British

Columbia as chief of staff to Finance Minister Brenda Bailey.

It's not unusual to see federal staff cross party lines in taking up political jobs provincially in B.C., though typically that's involved Liberal-Conservative crossover, with examples of former federal Tory and Grit staffers alike being hired to work for the more right-of-centre B.C. Liberals, which rebranded to BC United in 2023. Unlike those parties, the B.C. NDP shares membership with the federal NDP.

Norman had been working for Freeland since 2022, starting as a senior regional adviser for the Pacific and policy adviser, and is also a past West and North regional adviser to then-trade minister Mary Ng, and an ex-assistant to B.C. Liberal MP Terry Beech.

Also having taken up a job provincially—albeit on the public service side of the equation—is Micah Richardson, a former deputy director of housing policy to then-housing,

infrastructure, and communities minister Sean Fraser. Richardson is now executive director of housing acceleration and performance with Nova Scotia's Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Richardson left Fraser's team last August, and had been working for the federal housing minister since May 2022, starting as a policy adviser to then-housing, diversity, and inclusion minister Ahmed

Hussen. He was promoted to deputy director by Fraser in 2023.

Prior to joining Hussen's office, Richardson had been director of communications for the Nova Scotia Liberal caucus. He's also a past director of fundraising and digital with the Nova Scotia Liberal Party, and briefly worked as an operations adviser to then-Ontario education minister Indira Naidoo-Harris, among other past jobs.

Another former Freeland staffer, Nicholas Mahoney, is now busy pursuing a master of business administration degree at the Yale School of Management. Mahoney exited as a policy adviser

to the then-deputy PM and finance minister last May.

Mahoney first came to the Hill as a 2021 Liberal Summer Leadership Program intern in Freeland's ministerial office, after which he was hired on full time as a special assistant for policy. He was promoted to policy adviser in 2022.

Will Keefe, who was most recently senior policy adviser to then-families, children, and social development minister Jenna Sudds, has made his way across the pond since bidding adieu

to the Hill last May. He's now working towards a master of public policy degree at the University of Oxford.

Keefe had been working for the federal families minister since 2020, starting under then-minister Hussen as a special

assistant for operations. He was promoted to policy adviser under then-minister

Karina Gould in 2021, and again to senior policy adviser in 2022. Keefe is also an ex-aide to Hussen as the MP for York South-Weston, Ont.

Likely making the farthest leap from the Hill is Alexander Craney, a former senior policy adviser to then-labour and seniors minister Seamus O'Regan, is now director of public policy with the consulting firm Gemini Group in Tokyo, Japan.

Craney worked for the Trudeau government between 2020 and 2024, starting as a policy adviser to then-fisheries and oceans minister Bernadette Jordan. He joined O'Regan's office as then-labour minister as a senior policy adviser in early 2022, and

stayed on after O'Regan took on added responsibility for the seniors portfolio in July 2023. A former government relations and public affairs manager with D2L, Craney has also briefly worked for then-Liberal MP Bill Morneau, and during his undergrad, spent the summer of 2011 as a legislative assistant to Hiroe Makiyama, a member of Japan's House of Councillors.

Mark Duggan, who was last on the Hill as director of issues management to O'Regan as then-labour and seniors minister, has stuck closer to home, and is now manager of communications and engagement with oil and gas company North Atlantic in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Duggan exited the labour and seniors office shortly after O'Regan resigned from cabinet. O'Regan is not seeking re-election this year. A past senior manager of public affairs and government relations for Bell, Duggan had been working for O'Regan since 2021, starting as a policy adviser in O'Regan's office as then-natural resources minister. Duggan followed O'Regan when he was shuffled into the labour portfolio on the heels of the 2021 election, becoming director of issues management and senior Atlantic adviser.

Finally—for this update, at least—Annie Berger,

a former senior policy adviser to the federal employment minister, is now a policy adviser for the Union des municipalités du Québec, which, as its name suggests, represents the interests of municipal governments across Quebec.

Berger worked in the employment minister's office for a little more than a year, starting as a policy adviser to then-minister Randy Boissonnault in September 2023 and ending as a senior policy adviser to then-acting minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor this past December.

Berger landed her first federal political gig in 2020 as a constituency assistant to then-prime minister Justin Trudeau as the MP for Papineau, Que. By the start of 2022, she'd

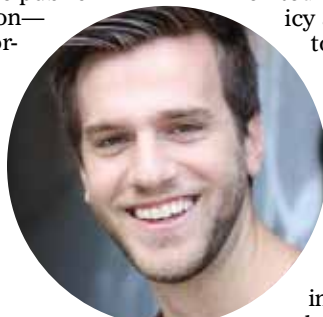
found her way to a cabinet office as executive assistant to Petitpas Taylor as then-official languages and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency minister. Berger had worked her way up to policy and parliamentary affairs adviser in Petitpas Taylor's official languages office by the time she exited to work for Boissonnault.

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Tyler Norman is now chief of staff to B.C.'s finance minister.

Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Micah Richardson is now working for Nova Scotia's department of municipal affairs and housing. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Nicholas Mahoney is now studying at Oxford. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Alexander Craney now works for the Gemini Group in Japan. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Annie Berger now works for the Union des municipalités du Québec. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Parliamentary Calendar

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

Canadian Medical Association digs into 'politics of change' at three-day summit March 26-28



The Canadian Medical Association hosts its Health Summit on the theme 'the politics of change,' in Ottawa from Wednesday, March 26, to Friday, March 28. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26

AFN National Chief to Deliver Remarks—Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak will deliver remarks on "Indigenous Economic Leadership in a Changing Global Landscape," hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Wednesday, March 26, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

Webinar: 'Canadians' Response to Crises'—Ipsos hosts a webinar, "From the Pandemic to the President: Canadians' Response to Crises," unpacking the impact of global and domestic challenges on Canada. Drawing from several of Ipsos' proprietary data sources, this special live session will feature four senior Ipsos leaders exploring how Trump's policies have influenced Canada, and what lies ahead for the nation. Wednesday, March 26, at 1 p.m. ET happening online: ipsos.com.

EU Ambassador to Canada to Deliver Remarks—European Union Ambassador to Canada Geneviève Tuts will take part in a panel discussion, "EU + Canadian Approaches to International High Tech Governance Issues," hosted by the Canadian International Council and KPMG. Wednesday, March 26, at 5:30 p.m. ET at KPMG, 150 Elgin St., Suite 1800. Details via Eventbrite.

Panel: 'Politics, Patriotism and Polling'—The Empire Club of Canada hosts a panel discussion, "Politics, Patriotism and Polling: Forecasting the 2025 Federal Election" featuring outgoing Liberal MP Seamus O'Regan; Abacus Data pollster David Coletto; Kathleen Monk, principal of Monk+Associates; and Kory Teneycke, co-founder and CEO of Rubicon Strategy. Wednesday, March 26, at 5:30 p.m. ET at a location to be announced. Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26—FRIDAY, MARCH 28

CMA Health Summit—The Canadian Medical Association hosts its Health Summit on the theme "the politics of change." Participants include CMA president Dr. Joss Reimer; Dr. Ashley Miller, chief medical information officer, Nova Scotia Health; Anthony Morgan, co-host, *The Nature of Things*; and content creator Brittlesstar. Wednesday, March 26, to Friday, March 28, in Ottawa. Details: events.cma.ca/website/81161/eng/home.

THURSDAY, MARCH 27

Panel: 'Mining in the New Political Era'—Former Liberal MP Paul Lefebvre, now mayor of Sudbury, Ont., will take part in a panel discussion, "Mining in the New Political Era," hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Thursday, March 27, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

Lecture: 'Canada's LGBT Purge: Is History Repeating Itself?'—Carleton University hosts this year's Chet Mitchell Memorial Lecture on the topic "Canada's LGBT Purge: Is History Repeating Itself?" featuring Michelle Douglas, executive director of the LGBT Purge Fund. Friday, March 28, at 10 a.m. ET at 2017 Dunton Tower, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details: events.carleton.ca.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1

Economic Reconciliation Summit—Canada 2020 hosts "The Indigenous-led Economy: 2025 Economic Reconciliation Summit." Industry innovators, community leaders, and Indigenous innovators will explore best practices in trade, security, and economic development, building social and political solidarity, and leading the way on thoughtful policy-making toward economic reconciliation. Tuesday, April 1, at the Westin Hotel Ottawa, 55 Colonel By Dr. Details: canada2020.ca.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2

Alto's President Imbleau to Deliver Remarks—Martin Imbleau, president and CEP of high-speed rail network Alto, will deliver remarks. Wednesday, April 2, at 12 p.m. ET, at the C.D. Howe Institute, 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2—THURSDAY, APRIL 3

Combating Sports Manipulation and Betting Integrity Event—The Council of Europe and Loto-Quebec host "Combating Sports Manipulation and Betting Integrity," a two-day series of morning and afternoon sessions on themes like the manipulation of sports competitions and illegal betting. Wednesday, April 2, to Thursday, April 3, at Casino du Lac-Leamy, Gatineau, Que. Register by March 28. Contact: sport.t-mc@coe.int.

THURSDAY, APRIL 3

Lunch: 'Collaborative Strategies for Interprovincial Trade'—The C.D. Howe Institute hosts a lunch event, "Beyond Boundaries: Collaborative Strategies for Interprovincial Trade" featuring Christiane Fox, deputy clerk of the Privy Council; Corinne Pohlmann, executive vice-president, Canadian Federation of Independent Business; and Ryan Manucha, interprovincial trade researcher at the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, April 3, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

MONDAY, APRIL 7

Politics at the Pub—The Canadian International Council hosts a "Politics and the Pub" event on the theme "Careers in International Affairs and The Art of Diplomacy" featuring former Canadian career diplomats Patricia Fortier, Peter MacArthur, and Roxanne Dubé. Monday, April 7, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Bridge Public House, 1 Donald St. Details via Eventbrite.

TUESDAY, APRIL 8

Seminar: 'The Prosperity of Indigenous Peoples across the Indo-Pacific'—Hosted by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada and the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa, the seminar will focus on Indigenous economic empowerment, language revitalization, education, and Indigenous-museum relations. Featured participants include Elder Claudette Commanda, Métis National Council president Victoria Pruden, and Indigenous Languages Commissioner Ronald Ignace. Tuesday, April 8, at 8:30 a.m. ET at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Social Sciences Building 4007, 120 University Pvt. Details: cips-cepi.ca/event/gctf-workshop-the-prosperity-of-indigenous-peoples-across-the-indo-pacific/

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9—FRIDAY, APRIL 11

2025 Progress Summit—The Broadbent Institute hosts the 2025 Progress Summit, Canada's largest annual progressive politics conference featuring thought leaders, movement builders, elected officials, and frontline activists. Wednesday, April 9, to Friday, April 11, at the City Centre Delta, 101 Lyon St. N. Details: broadbentinstitute.ca.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9—SATURDAY, APRIL 12

CSFN 25 Conference—The Canada Strong and Free Network hosts its annual conference in Ottawa. This year's theme is "From Ideas to Action." Participants include Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, B.C. Conservative Leader John Rustad, former chief of defence staff Rick Hillier, former cabinet minister Tony Clement, and strategists Kory Teneycke and Ginny Roth, and former U.S. trade rep Robert Lighthizer. Wednesday, April 9, to Saturday, April 12, at the Westin Hotel Ottawa, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

FRIDAY, APRIL 11

Off the Pages: A Celebration of Banned Books—This annual event features local authors reading from their favourite banned books. This year's guest authors are Charlotte Gray, Dr. Monia Mazigh, Suyi Davies Okungbowa, and Dancia Kendra Susilo. A fundraiser for local adult and family literacy organization Alternative Learning Styles and Outlooks, the evening includes live music, food, drinks and a silent auction. Friday, April 11, 6:30 p.m. ET, at Heartwood House, 404 McArthur Ave. Details and tickets at: also-ottawa.org/events.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23

Bruce Heyman to Deliver Remarks—Former U.S. ambassador to Canada Bruce Heyman, now CEO of Power Sustainable, will deliver remarks on the environment at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Wednesday, April 23, at 11:30 a.m. ET at a location to be announced in Montreal. Details: corim.qc.ca.

FRIDAY, APRIL 25

'An Inclusive Parliament?'—The Canadian Study of Parliament Group hosts "An Inclusive Parliament?" exploring equity, diversity, inclusion, and access in legislative spaces, from the experiences of legislators themselves to public engagement and staff participation behind the scenes. Friday, April 25, at 9 a.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St. Details via Eventbrite.

Superintendent of Financial Institutions to Deliver Remarks—Peter Routledge, head of the Office of the

Superintendent of Financial Institutions, will speak at a lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Friday, April 25, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

FRIDAY, APRIL 25—SUNDAY, APRIL 27

IMF and World Bank Ministerial Meetings—The 2025 Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund will take place from Friday, April 25, to Sunday, April 27, in Washington, D.C. Details: worldbank.org.

MONDAY, APRIL 28

Federal Election Day—Canadians from coast to coast to coast will head to the polls to vote in the snap election called by Prime Minister Mark Carney on March 23.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30

CANIC 2025—The Canadian Military Intelligence Association hosts CANIC 2025, the Canadian Intelligence Conference. Participants include Nathalie Drouin, national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister, and her predecessor Richard Fadden, among others. Wednesday, April 30, at 7:30 a.m. ET, Ottawa Conference and Event Centre, 200 Coventry Rd. Details via Eventbrite.

THURSDAY, MAY 1

Panel: 'Canada vs. Trump'—The Economic Club of Canada hosts a lunch event, "100 Days of Disruption: Canada vs. Trump" featuring Flavio Volpe, president, Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association; Benjamin Tal, deputy chief economist, CIBC Capital Markets; and Jeremy Kronick, C.D. Howe Institute's director of monetary and financial services research. Thursday, May 1, at 11:45 a.m. ET in Toronto. Details: economicclub.ca.

TUESDAY, MAY 6

National Prayer Breakfast—Held under the auspices of the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons, the National Prayer Breakfast includes Canadian and international Christian faith leaders, ambassadors, MPs, Senators, and Canadians tuning in from across our nation and abroad. Tuesday, May 6, at 7:30 a.m. ET at Rogers Centre Ottawa, 55 Colonel By Dr. Details via Eventbrite.

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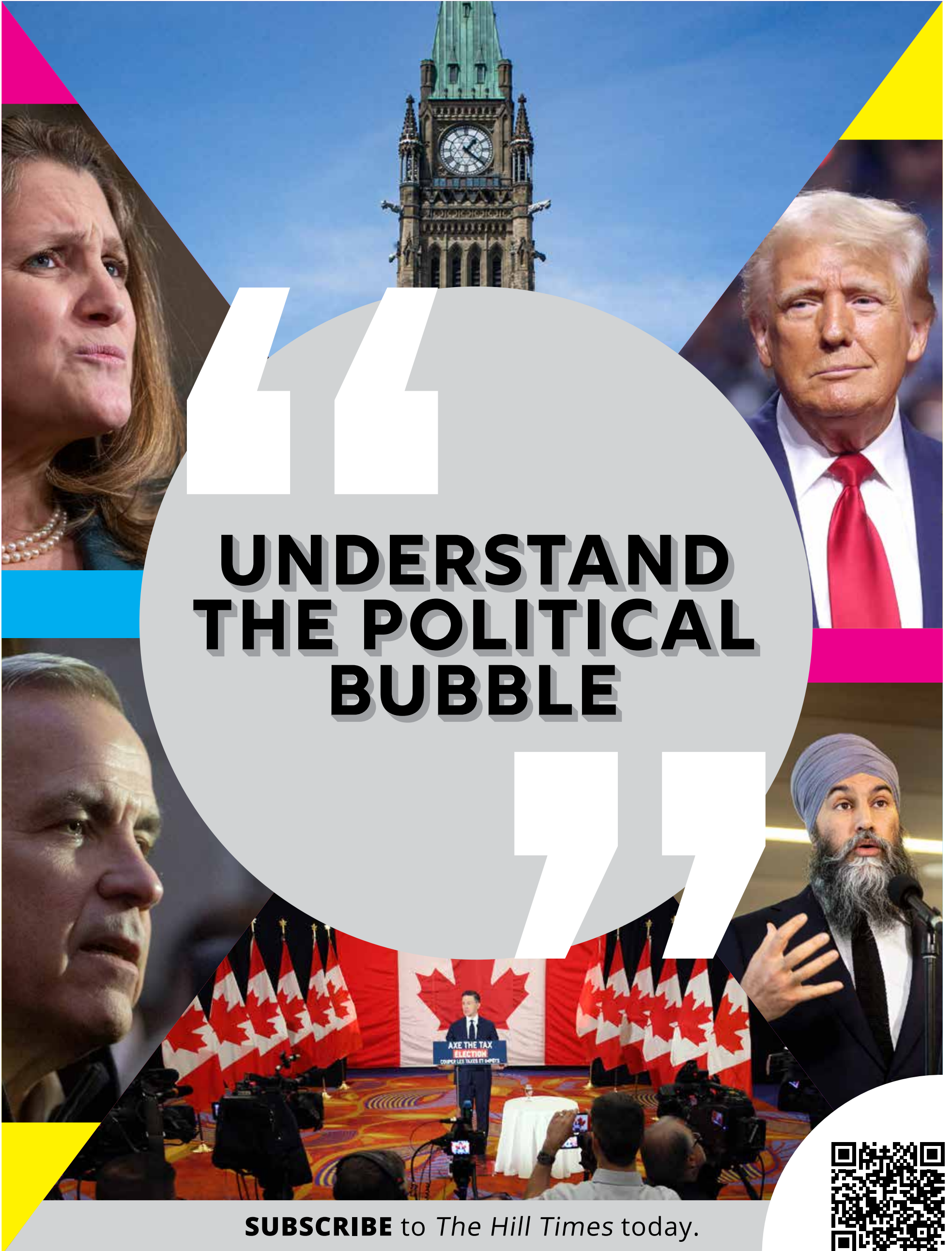
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