



THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR, NO. 2209

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2025 \$5.00

NEWS

Singh the party leader in 'most danger' of losing his seat, pollsters say, as NDP suffers national drop in support

BY IREM KOCA

With his party down in national support, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh faces an uphill battle to keep his seat in the newly redrawn riding of Burnaby Central, B.C., say pollsters.

Most federal party leaders are expected to hold their seats in the 2025 federal election, but not all are on equally solid ground.

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has a tight grip on his riding of Carleton, Ont., while Liberal Leader Mark Carney—fighting for a seat in the Parliament for the first time—is just as strongly poised to secure Nepean, Ont.

Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet is sitting comfortably in Beloeil-Chambly, Que., and Green Party co-leader Elizabeth May seems safe in Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C. However, her co-leader Jonathan Pedneault is unlikely to win in the Montreal-area Liberal stronghold of Outremont, Que. Similarly, Maxime Bernier, leader of the People's Party, will face a challenge unseating the Conservatives in Beauce, Que., the riding he lost in the 2019 election.

While pollsters note there is very little polling looking specifically at ridings at this stage, national polling data as well as previous victory margins paint a certain picture.

Singh faces a tight race in Burnaby Central—previously known Burnaby South prior to the boundary changes—the riding he first won in 2019. Based on a transposition of the 2021 results onto the new boundaries, Singh would have won 39.78 per cent of the vote in Burnaby Central that year, 8.53 percentage points ahead of his Liberal opponent Brea Huang Sami.

According to Andrew Enns, executive vice-president at Leger, the NDP brand is doing "very poorly" in this election. "There needs to be a fairly significant turnout for the NDP for Singh to win his seat," Enns said.

Pollsters highlight that most party leaders typically enjoy a small bump in the polls. Even

Continued on page 3

Carney asks Canadians for a majority to deal with Trump

A few months ago, only people who were smoking the drapes would have thought a Liberal majority possible. Now, who knows?

► MICHAEL HARRIS PAGE 10

The 111 safest seats in Canada

The 50 most vulnerable seats

A closer look at cabinet ministers' seats

All the party leaders' seats

The bellwether seats

Let's do this: Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured March 23, 2025, outside Rideau Hall in Ottawa after calling the federal election. The election will be held on Monday, April 28, four weeks from now. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

Election to likely hinge on 50 most competitive ridings, but things could shift greatly by polling day, say politicos

BY ABBAS RANA

With American tariffs and calls for change creating extreme voter volatility, the federal election outcome will depend on tight races, but the list of battleground ridings may shift before the campaign ends—making it challenging for field organizers to decide where to deploy their additional resources, say politicos.

"Your list [of close ridings] right now is going to be completely different in a few weeks," said Earl Washburn, senior analyst and a pollster with Ekos Research, in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

Washburn said that public opinion remains highly volatile, and the political landscape could shift rapidly. He pointed out that

Continued on page 22

Inside



News: Anti-Black racism complaint bound for Canadian Human Rights Commission after Federal Court denies public service class action. **p. 4**



Susan Riley: Bread, not circuses: dwindling appetite for politics as usual is helping Carney. **p. 11**



David Crane: Canada needs more than oil and gas to keep the country afloat. **p. 14**



Sheila Copps: With friends like Danielle Smith, Pierre Poilievre doesn't need enemies. **p. 9**

Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

'A respected colleague': former Reform, Conservative MP John Cummins died on March 2, age 82



Former long-time British Columbia MP John Cummins, who sat for over 17 years under three parties, died earlier this month, aged 82. *The Hill Times* file photograph

The funeral for former long-time British Columbia MP **John Cummins** was held on March 29 in Delta, B.C.

Cummins died in Kamloops on March 2, just days shy of his 83rd birthday. His will interred in Georgetown, Ont., where he was born.

According to his obituary, Cummins taught for 15 years in Delta, B.C., and for 25 years owned and operated the commercial Gillnetters fishery on the Fraser.

He got involved with the nascent right-leaning Reform Party in 1988, and was elected as a Reform MP in 1993, representing the riding of Delta-South Richmond.

In total, Cummins was re-elected to Parliament five times, serving a total of 17.5 years in the House of Commons under three different political parties: first as Reform until 2000 when the party evolved into the Canadian Alliance. Then, in 2003, that party merged with the federal Progressive Conservative Party into today's Conservative Party of Canada.

"He proved to be an outstanding spokesperson for the community, unafraid to overstep the political boundaries of his party. Earning a reputation as the Maverick MP and was considered

one of the most trusted members of Parliament," reads Cummins' obituary, noting that he chose not to seek re-election in 2011.

Cummins' obituary recalls that his last words in the House of Commons were: "My hope when first elected was that when my time here was done the folks at home would say, He kept his word. He represented us well. That remains my fondest hope. Thank you."

Former NDP MP **Svend Robinson**, also from B.C., wrote in the online condolence book on March 16 that "John was a respected colleague in the House of Commons and served his community well."

Not quite done with politics, Cummins ran unopposed to become the leader of the BC Conservatives in 2011, but officially retired to his family farm in Langley, B.C., in 2013, later moving to Ladysmith. In 2020, Cummins suffered from a spinal stroke "leaving him paralyzed from the waist down," reads his obit, but he recovered enough to walk again.

Predeceased by his first wife **Phyllis "Tracey"**, Cummins is survived by **Sue**, his wife of 34 years, their daughter **Carolyn**, son **Martin**, two stepdaughters, 10 grandchildren and one great-grandson.

Peru's flavours shine at lunchtime masterclass



Heidy Calonge Garcia de Talavera, the ambassador of Peru's wife, left, and chef Lizardo Becerra at his restaurant, Raphael, on March 26. *The Hill Times* photograph by Christina Leadlay

More than two dozen guests were virtually transported to Peru last week at a cooking demonstration hosted by the Embassy of Peru and the Heads of Mission Spouses Association at Raphael restaurant on Elgin Street on March 26.

Raphael's owner and chef **Lizardo Becerra** showed the predominantly female crowd how to make three classic dishes from his homeland: the pisco sour cocktail, the appetizer *causa rellena*, and the South American country's national dish, ceviche, featuring wild caught Pacific ling cod cured lightly in salt and "cooked" in his own blend of "tiger's milk" featuring lime juice, ginger, garlic, cilantro, and one of Peru's many varieties of fiery chili pepper.

The 36-year-old chef spoke about the importance of fresh ingredients, showed off his knife skills, and described the history of the dishes he was preparing, such as *causa rellena*, which was created during the 19th century War of the Pacific when the community would gather the ingredients they had on hand (like potatoes, fish, and avocados) to cook for "the cause"—to help feed the soldiers. As Becerra finished each recipe, his staff gave each guest a portion to enjoy. **Heard on the Hill** can personally vouch for the crisp, bright flavours in all three dishes, and the artistry with which Becerra and his team used in their presentation.

Ambassador **Manuel Gerardo Talavera Espinar** and his wife **Heidy** bookended the masterclass with remarks on what makes Peru's food so unique, from the confluence of history, geography and human factors like colonialism, immigration and chefs bringing home their skills honed abroad, to how chili peppers are the Pacific nation's "superpower" in the kitchen.

Senator Karetak-Lindell joins ISG

Nunavut's new Senator **Nancy Karetak-Lindell** has chosen to join the Independent Senators Group.

The former MP announced her decision on March 25.

Nominated to the Senate on Dec. 19, 2024, Karetak-Lindell served as the Liberal MP for the Eastern Arctic from 1997 to 2008. Her addition to the ISG brings its total membership to 42.

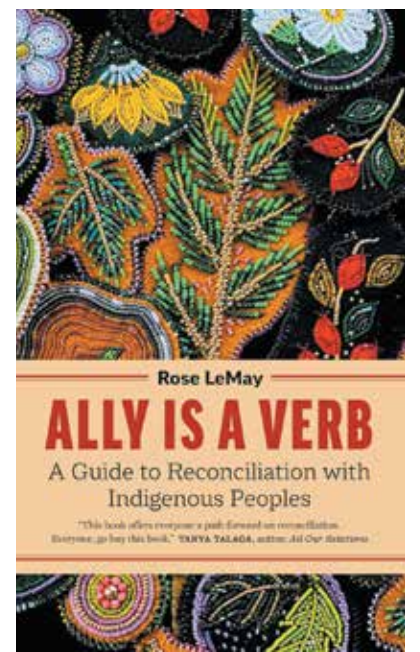


Nunavut Senator Nancy Karetak-Lindell. *Photograph courtesy of sencanada.ca*

Rose LeMay's new book coming April 22

The Hill Times' columnist **Rose LeMay** has a new book coming out next month: *Ally is a Verb: A Guide to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*, published by Strong Nations Publishing. LeMay is scheduled to chat about the book with **Hilary McVey**, managing partner of DEIA from Deloitte Canada, and **Julie Cafley**, executive director of Catalyst Canada, at a private book launch on April 22 at the Deloitte Greenhouse, Bayview Yards Innovation Centre.

"What can you do to be a better ally for your Indigenous colleagues, community members, and friends?" reads the book description on the publisher's website. "By actively listening to the history and current lived experiences of Indigenous peoples, you can take steps to address the inequities they continue to face. Author Rose LeMay notes that if you continually educate yourself, you will see many opportunities to be an ally."



Rose LeMay's book, *Ally is a Verb*, is out on April 22. *Book cover courtesy of Strong Nations Publishing*

Longtime Liberal organizer Bea Ross had died

The funeral for longtime Liberal Party organizer **Bea Ross** took place at Ottawa's Saint Patrick's Basilica on March 24, with Public Safety Minister **David McGuinty**, Liberal MP **Yasir Naqvi**, former Ontario premier **Dalton McGuinty**, and ex-Ottawa mayor **Jim Watson** in attendance.

Ross died on March 18, aged 91.

Born in Johnville, N.B., in 1934, Ross came to Ottawa in 1954 to work for Bell Canada, which she did for 36 years. "Bea caught the political bug and was first involved in federal politics during the 1957 election, and she never looked back," reads her obituary. "Her unparalleled political instincts served the Liberal Party for over 65 years. Her impeccable, sage advice and organizational skills helped the Young Liberals, the National Executive of the Party, and twelve national conventions."

"With her support, many leaders were elected at all political



Liberal organizer Bea Ross, right, with former Liberal MP Paul Zed in 2008. *The Hill Times* photograph by Cynthia Münster

levels, including prime ministers, premiers and local candidates in the Ottawa area. Her contribution to the political world was recognized by many distinguished volunteer awards."

She is predeceased by husband **James**, who was a former president of the Rideau Club. She was also active in the National Press Club.

cleadlay@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Singh the party leader in 'most danger' of losing his seat, pollsters say, as NDP suffers national drop in support

Continued from page 1

with that, Singh could lose in Burnaby, according to Quito Maggi, president of Mainstreet Research. "Singh is in the most danger," Maggi said.

An Angus Reid poll from March 24 shows the NDP's support at seven per cent, with half of the party's past voters indicating an intention to vote for the Liberals if the election were held today.

Sean Simpson, senior vice-president at Ipsos, said a drop in NDP support, as well as a surge in support for Liberals who were in second place in that riding in 2021, "could be enough swing to cost Singh his seat."

According to Simpson, "it looks like Canadians may be turning the page" when it comes to Singh, as he is seen as having been a partner to an unpopular and weakening Justin Trudeau in his last years as prime minister through the Liberal-NDP supply-and-confidence agreement. "In the long run, that seems to have hurt the party. It looks like the progressive vote is consolidating around Carney as the person who could best defeat Poilievre," Simpson explained.

Voters feel they might get the change they want with either Carney or Poilievre, and they will choose which version of change they prefer, Simpson argued.

"The problem is Singh doesn't really represent change. He was part of the mechanism that kept the Liberals in power for so long," Simpson said.

Another factor working against Singh is the ballot question of who can best stand up to U.S. President Donald Trump, according to Simpson—and only eight per cent of Canadians believe that person is Singh. "He's not part of that equation," Simpson said.

"This is a pocketbook election across the board. Affordability is the No. 1 issue Canadians are raising—in every riding, province, and region," Maggi said, noting that climate change, reconciliation and social programs are low in voter priorities.

The second most important issue is Trump's tariffs and the broader economic fallout from the trade war, which combined, make up about 85 per cent of top concerns according to Maggi, who highlighted that housing and other topics account for just slivers of the remaining 15 per cent, and they're still economic in nature.

"So, the candidate, leader or party with the strongest economic platform will have a tremendous advantage," Maggi said.

Carney is vying for a House of Commons seat for the first time in Nepean, Ont., an Ottawa-area riding. Until recently, Nepean was held by Liberal backbencher MP Chandra Arya. Under the transposition of votes into the new riding boundaries, the Liberals would have received 45.74 per cent of the vote in 2021, more than 12 points ahead of the Conservatives.

Enns said Carney is "in good shape," as he is running in a Liberal stronghold, and his party is currently trending strongly in popular opinion nationally.

A Leger poll conducted last week indicated that the Liberals are six points ahead with 44 per cent of the vote, compared to 38 per cent for the Conservatives. Similarly, the latest Abacus Data survey shows the Liberals at 44 per cent, the Conservatives at 38 per cent, and the NDP at 11 per cent.

With no previous electoral record, Carney faces the rare challenge of leading a national campaign while trying to secure his own seat, according to Maggi, who noted that in the past, leaders have been able to establish support in their ridings before seeking the top job.

A party leader typically wouldn't spend more than a couple of days in their riding during an election, but Carney may need to linger longer than most, Maggi argued. "This is his first time out—there's no base for him."

"But I suspect he'll win quite handily," Maggi said.

One of the important factors as to how well the party leaders do in their own ridings is the voter profile. In Nepean, for instance, there is a heavy concentration of public servants.

"So, obviously, they'll be paying attention in terms of what Mr. Carney's plans are," Enns said. "He announced his big tax cut last week, but he also made pains to say he's not cutting any programs—which will make some civil servants probably more comfortable," Enns added.

In Poilievre's riding of Carleton, which is next door to Nepean, it is mostly agricultural communities and a mix of small-town and service sector voters. Only a small portion of the demographic are public servants, who'd likely not support Poilievre's push to cut the federal workforce, according to Enns.

Simpson said Carney has some "cache," for having been a former public servant himself, and having lived in Ottawa during his time as governor of the Bank of Canada, all of which will likely be seen as net favourables within the riding of Nepean.

Maggi also argued it is surprising that Carney—who lives in the federal riding of Ottawa-Vanier-Gloucester—chose to run in Nepean, which he said is a diverse and growing constituency, with internal divisions and issues tied to different diaspora communities.

Arya was blocked from running in the recent Liberal leadership race nomination, and his nomination in Nepean was revoked by the party due to alleged foreign interference concerns involving India, *The Globe and Mail* reported. This will likely have a small effect—if any—on Carney's support in Nepean, according to pollsters.

Liberals in Nepean are still likely to vote for Carney, according to Simpson: "Where else are you going to go? You could vote for the NDP, I suppose, but the Conservatives were in second place in Nepean, so that's not really a compelling choice."

Poilievre has held the riding of Carleton since 2004. Elections Canada transposition data of the 2021 election shows the Conservatives would have won 51.86 per cent of the vote in the redrawn riding.

"That's a pretty solid lead. We would have to see a fairly fundamental shift in the popular vote figures in order for him to be in jeopardy of losing his seat," Simpson said.

Enns said he does not expect "much excitement" there, but he notes that the riding's new boundaries—stretching from Renfrew County to Prescott-Russell—could give Poilievre a slight boost.

"What was already a strong seat for Poilievre has become much stronger," Enns said, noting redistribution has removed a more urban area and added rural parts of Eastern Ontario that tend to vote Conservative.

Maggi said Carleton voters "like that he is a fighter, he's been a good MP for them, and they have known him for a very, very long time." But added that his modelling shows Poilievre's win is not going to be "a blowout," as some voters still hold residual anger over Poilievre's support for the so-called "Freedom Convoy", a weeks-long protests held in opposition to COVID-19 mandates and prime minister Justin Trudeau's government which gridlocked downtown Ottawa in the winter of 2022.

Green Party co-leader Elizabeth May has held Saanich-Gulf Islands—a British Columbia riding where agriculture and tourism are the main economic drivers—since 2011.

Meanwhile, the other Green Co-Leader Jonathan Pedneault appears to be facing an uphill battle in the riding where he is running, according to pollsters.

Pedneault is running in Outremont, a Liberal stronghold in Montreal. In 2021, Liberal MP Rachel Bendayan won the riding handily. Based on the transposition data, the Greens only got 3.12 per cent of the vote in the redrawn boundaries, putting the party in fifth position. Bendayan is running again in this riding.

"The Green Party is suffering as much as the NDP. They just didn't have as far to fall," Enns said. Leger's latest polling had the Greens around three per cent nationally, according to Enns, which is down from their usual five or six per cent.

Enns said Pedneault likely won't win in Outremont because although Quebecers tend to be more environmentally conscious, that has never translated to any real level of Green Party vote.

Under Trudeau, the Liberal Party lost traditionally safe seats in Montreal and Toronto, but now "they've got the wind in their sails" with Carney as leader, Simpson said, adding it would be "a really tough hill to climb" for Pedneault to win.

It is "not a given" for May to secure her seat, but she will likely retain it, according to Simpson, given the Conservatives—who placed second in her riding in the 2021 election—aren't doing all that much better this time.

As for Blanchet's riding of Beloeil-Chambly, the transposition shows the Bloc would have taken 53.53 per cent of the votes in the redrawn riding in 2021, with a commanding 30-point lead over the Liberals, which marks the largest winning margin among federal leaders.

"Something catastrophic would have to happen for him not to win his seat again," Simpson said, a sentiment all pollsters agreed with.

Simpson noted that it's not a shoo-in that party leaders will be elected, and the margin of victory the last time out is a good indicator as to how things might turn out.

One example of that is Maxime Bernier, leader of the People's Party, who lost in the Quebec riding Beauce in 2021—despite having won it four times previously when he was a Conservative MP. Pollsters say they don't expect Bernier to win in Beauce this year, either.

Bernier lost this seat in 2019 after he split from the Conservatives. In 2021, Bernier's PPC placed second with 18.19 per cent.

ikoca@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Ridings Party Leaders are Contesting (currently held by party)

Leader	Party	In Parliament Since	Riding	Province	2021 Vote %	2021 Runner-up Party	2021 Winning Margin
Mark Carney	Liberal	N/A	Nepean	Ontario	45.74%	Conservative Party of Canada	12.37
Pierre Poilievre	Conservative	2004	Carleton	Ontario	51.86%	Liberal Party of Canada	19.99
Jagmeet Singh	NDP	2019	Burnaby Central	British Columbia	39.78%	Liberal Party of Canada	8.53
Yves-François Blanchet	Bloc Québécois	2019	Beloeil-Chambly	Quebec	53.53%	Liberal Party of Canada	30.10
Elizabeth May	Green	2011	Saanich-Gulf Islands	British Columbia	35.77%	Conservative Party of Canada	13.12

Source: Elections Canada

Ridings Party Leaders are Contesting (not currently held by party)

Leader	Party	Riding	Province	Winning Party 2021	2021 Vote %	Leader's Party 2021 Vote %	Leader's Party 2021 Position
Jonathan Pedneault	Green	Outremont	Quebec	Liberal	44.36%	3.12%	Fifth
Maxime Bernier	People's Party	Beauce	Quebec	Conservative	48.29%	18.19%	Second

Source: Elections Canada

NEWS

Anti-Black racism complaint bound for Canadian Human Rights Commission after court denies public service class action

The Public Service Alliance of Canada filed a human rights complaint on behalf of all of its Black members employed in the federal public service on March 27.

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

Weeks after a Federal Court decision to deny certification of a class-action lawsuit initiated by Black public servants, the country's largest public sector union has filed a human rights complaint alleging decades of anti-Black racism in the federal civil service.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) announced on March 27 that it had filed a human rights complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission on behalf of all of its Black members employed in the federal public service.

The complaint alleges that the government has failed over decades to address anti-Black racism in its workplaces, including racist comments, discriminatory behaviour, greater scrutiny and disproportionate discipline, the dismissal or downplaying of discrimination and harassment complaints, barriers to hiring and promotion, unequal career development and training access, and a failure to address racism and bias in staffing processes.

"For decades, Black federal public service workers have endured racism at work, been shut out of job opportunities, and denied the safe workplace they deserve," said PSAC national president Sharon DeSousa in a March 27 statement. "Instead of fixing the problem, the government fought Black workers in court hoping it would all just go away. We won't back down until the government is held accountable and our members get the justice they deserve."

PSAC is the bargaining agent for the majority of claimants in a Black class action lawsuit launched in 2020 against 99 federal government departments and agencies. That lawsuit was denied certification earlier this month by the Federal Court, prompting disappointment from the lead plaintiffs and a commitment to consider their next options.



Black Class Action Secretariat president Nicholas Marcus Thompson, pictured at a rally outside the Prime Minister's Office last year. The secretariat has vowed to keep fighting after a Federal Court judge denied certification of a \$2.5-billion class action lawsuit. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

"This ruling is a major disappointment, but it is not the end of our fight for justice," said the Black Class Action Secretariat (BCAS) in a statement responding to the dismissal. "For five years, this has been a David vs. Goliath battle, and while today's outcome is frustrating, it only strengthens our resolve."

Justice Jocelyne Gagné dismissed the motion to certify the class-action lawsuit on March 13, agreeing with a federal government motion to strike the claim before it proceeded to trial. The Crown argued that the courts lacked jurisdiction over the claim, and that the claimants could seek recourse via unions or the Federal Public Service Labour Relations Act.

In her "order and reasons" decision, Gagné said the plaintiffs had "failed to present a ground for this court to assert jurisdiction over this case," as there were not common-enough issues across the claim.

BCAS has sought \$2.5-billion in damages from the federal government over its alleged systemic failure to hire and promote Black staff.

Gagné said the scope of the claim "simply makes it unfit for a class procedure," using a French proverb that translates into "he who grasps at too much holds little." That did not, however, constitute a judgment on whether or not there had been discrimination against Black public servants, she wrote.

"The Court does acknowledge the profoundly sad ongoing history of discrimination suffered by Black Canadians, just as it recognizes the fact that each one of the representative plaintiffs have faced challenges not faced by their non-visible minority colleagues in the federal public service," Gagné wrote in her decision. "But unfortunately, that was not the issue that the court was tasked to assess."

"Several times during the hearing of these motions, counsel for the plaintiffs stated that the court was their last hope to obtain a fair outcome for the prejudice suffered. Although I truly sympathize with the plaintiffs, and for all the reasons stated above, I respectfully disagree."

Those reasons, Gagné wrote, included that the plaintiffs did not meet the procedural threshold to certify it as a class action as—among other criteria—there was no class of persons that "can be identified objectively" without relying on the merits of their individual claims; the claim did not raise common questions of law or fact across 99 federal entities; the plaintiffs could have used other "intended statutory, regulatory and procedural processes and remedies" rather than the courts; and there was not an "adequate litigation plan."

In a statement following the decision, BCAS blamed the federal government's use of "procedural loopholes" to delay action

against systemic racism and discrimination.

"We put our faith in the courts to recognize the profound harm caused to Black workers over decades," representative plaintiff Nicholas Marcus Thompson said in the statement. "Instead, the government used procedural loopholes to avoid accountability, leaving thousands of Black public service workers betrayed and still fighting for justice."

The Hill Times requested an interview with BCAS representatives, but did not receive a response by the deadline. In the secretariat's statement immediately following the Federal Court decision, it noted that "the representative plaintiffs will be meeting with the legal team to determine the next steps and will have more to say soon."

The secretariat is also seeking a series of non-monetary measures to address discrimination in the public service. That includes a formal apology from the prime minister to all present and past Black public servants for injustices suffered in the past; the appointment of a "Black Equity Commission" to investigate challenges facing Black employees; an external mechanism for Black public servants to report harassment or misconduct, with the power to make binding recommendations; and the adoption of a federal policy requiring a Black employees of the public service to, at minimum, reflect the

approximately 3.7 per cent Black Canadians in the general national population.

Gagné's decision followed approximately three weeks of a certification hearing in October and November 2024. During that period, BCAS sought to include new evidence in the form of a study of Black executives in the public service.

The report, prepared by Rachel Zellars and commissioned by the federal Black Executives Network, found that 62 per cent of the 73 current and former executives interviewed reported direct workplace harassment or intimidation, or the threat of reputational harm from supervisors or senior leaders. Black women reported a higher rate of harassment, at 78 per cent.

In her decision, Gagné said the court could not rule on the motion as filed during the hearing. She said the court had agreed on the last day of the hearings to give the plaintiffs time "over the next few weeks" to discuss the motion with the defendant, but did not hear back before a supplementary motion record was filed on Feb. 20. By then, Gagné said, her reasons had already been sent for translation.

Following the ruling, the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC) said in a March 19 statement that it was also "deeply disappointed."

"We stand in unwavering solidarity with the Black Class Action Secretariat and our Black members," said PIPSC president Sean O'Reilly in the statement. "This decision is not the end of the fight but rather a moment that strengthens our resolve to pursue justice through all available channels."

Din I. Kamaldin, part of the PIPSC Black Caucus, said that "systemic racism requires systemic solutions."

"By dismissing this class action, the court has placed additional barriers in the path of those seeking redress for decades of discrimination," Kamaldin said.

The Canadian chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) said in a March 18 statement that the court "acknowledged the discrimination that these Black workers were experiencing while simultaneously choosing to deny these workers the justice that the federal court should provide."

The CBTU called for a mental health plan for employees who experienced racial trauma, as well as for the federal government to implement the recommendations of the 2024 review of the Employment Equity Act. The review's recommendations included an all-of-government approach to employment equity, confirmation that the legislation is quasi-constitutional human rights law, and the harmonization of employment equity frameworks across Canada.

The Ontario Federation of Labour criticized the decision, describing it in a March 19 statement as part of a system that "has failed to deliver accountability to Black Canadians."

sjeffery@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

PHOENIX GLOBAL FORUM



REGISTER NOW

📍 Phoenix Convention
Center

**FORGING THE
*FUTURE***

April 8-9



NEWS

2025 ELECTION

Ministers, ex-cabinet members and leadership aspirants seek to hold bellwethers for Liberals



Treasury Board President Ginette Petitpas Taylor, top left, Public Services Minister Ali Ehsassi, Environment Minister Terry Duguid, chief government whip Rechie Valdez, bottom left, Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, and Democratic Institutions Minister Arielle Kayabaga are all contesting bellwether ridings. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Of the 343 ridings to be contested, 34 have historically chosen the party that takes power at every election since at least 2011.

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

Six cabinet members and a former Liberal leadership candidate will contest bellwether ridings in the 2025 federal election, with more than half the seats based in the southern Ontario regions that helped deliver majorities for Stephen Harper's Conservatives in 2011 and Justin Trudeau's Grits in 2015.

Following the redistribution of ridings, there are currently 34 seats that have been held by whichever party has been in power since at least 2011. That does not include former bellwethers that have been abolished or split up into new ridings.

"Bellwether" is a term used to describe ridings that tend to vote in members of the governing party, switching between parties only when the national government changes. For the purposes of this story, bellwethers are any ridings that have elected a representative from the governing



Industry Minister Anita Anand will run in the new riding of Oakville East, Ont., one of two seats to replace the bellwether of Oakville, Ont. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Former Liberal leadership contestant Karina Gould is reoffering in one of the country's longest-lasting bellwether ridings. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

party at each election since 2011: the Conservatives from 2011-2015, and the Liberals ever since.

Half of those ridings have only been bellwethers since the 2011 election when the Conservatives made substantial inroads in the Greater Toronto Area and southwestern Ontario to secure majority government. Those gains were largely reversed in 2015 when the Liberals secured their

only majority government under Trudeau.

Following the 2019 and 2021 elections, the Liberals have retained 17 of the seats that first began as bellwethers in 2011.

Among the Liberals contesting the bellwether ridings are five ministers.

Environment Minister Terry Duguid is reoffering in Winnipeg South, Man., a bellwether since

1988; Democratic Institutions Minister Arielle Kayabaga in London West, Ont., which has backed the governing party since 2008; Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson in North Vancouver—Capilano, B.C., also a bellwether since 2008; and Treasury Board President Ginette Petitpas Taylor in Moncton—Dieppe, N.B., chief government whip Rechie Valdez in Mississauga—Streetsville, Ont., and Public Services and Procurement Minister Ali Ehsassi in Willowdale, Ont., all bellwethers since 2011.

Industry Minister Anita Anand, meanwhile, will run in the newly-formed seat of Oakville East, Ont., one of two ridings to be created from her erstwhile seat of Oakville, Ont. The former riding had been held by a governing party since 2008—first by Conservative MP Terence Young from 2008-2015, then by Liberal John Oliver from 2015-2019. Anand

succeeded Oliver when he opted not to reoffer after a single term.

Anand initially announced in January that she planned not to reoffer in the next election, but changed her mind in February. When announcing her decision to reporters in Toronto, she described the new riding as a bellwether.

"Thousands of Canadians have written to me, texted me, called me, spoken to me and asked me to stay, given this existential economic threat we are facing," she told reporters. "My goal has always been to serve our country, and if I can do more for our country during the time of potential Trump tariffs and in terms of my ability to reduce interprovincial barriers to trade, I want to do that."

Anand will face Conservative candidate Ron Chhinker, a former police officer who previously

Continued on page 33

Bellwether Ridings Since at Least 2011

Riding	Province/Territory	Bellwether Since	Winning Margin (2021)
Burlington	Ontario	1984	8.48
St. Catharines	Ontario	1984	5.50
Winnipeg South	Manitoba	1988	15.45
Orléans	Ontario	1993	23.67
Prescott—Russell—Cumberland	Ontario	1993	14.81
Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	1997	17.75
Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	2006	17.40
Central Nova	Nova Scotia	2006	11.45
Cambridge	Ontario	2006	4.10
North Vancouver—Capilano	British Columbia	2008	15.31
West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	2008	3.91
St. Boniface—St. Vital	Manitoba	2008	15.61
Saint John—Kennebecasis	New Brunswick	2008	6.21
London West	Ontario	2008	2.72
Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	2008	5.62
Waterloo	Ontario	2008	18.04
Egmont	Prince Edward Island	2008	14.90
Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	2011	17.17
Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	2011	24.22
Moncton—Dieppe	New Brunswick	2011	27.24
Brampton West	Ontario	2011	28.57
Don Valley West	Ontario	2011	27.32
Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	2011	12.03
Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	2011	14.04
Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	2011	14.67
London Centre	Ontario	2011	7.17
Mississauga East—Cooksville	Ontario	2011	18.67
Mississauga—Lakeshore	Ontario	2011	6.43
Mississauga—Streetsville	Ontario	2011	13.02
Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	2011	4.98
Richmond Hill South	Ontario	2011	9.07
Willowdale	Ontario	2011	17.34
York Centre	Ontario	2011	9.44
Yukon	Yukon	2011	7.09

Source: Elections Canada

2  **25** **ELECTION**

ALL CANADIANS CAN BE INSIDERS



SIGN-UP FOR **FREE ACCESS** TO OUR
ELECTION 2025 NEWSLETTER



Editor: Kate Malloy

Managing Editor: Charelle Evelyn

Digital Editor: Samantha Wright Allen

Executive Editor: Peter Mazereeuw

Deputy Editors: Stephen Jeffery,
Laura Ryckewaert

Assistant Deputy Editor: Abbas Rana

Publishers: Anne Marie Creskey,
Jim Creskey, Leslie Dickson, Ross Dickson

General Manager, CFO: Andrew Morrow

EDITORIAL**NEWS REPORTERS**Stuart Benson, Jesse Cnockaert, Riddhi Kachhela,
Irem Koca, and Neil Moss**ENGAGEMENT EDITOR**

Christina Leadlay

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sam Garcia, Andrew Meade, and Cynthia Münster

EDITORIAL CARTOONIST

Michael de Adder

COLUMNISTSAndrew Caddell, John Chenier,
Sheila Copps, David Crane, Jim Creskey,
Gwynne Dyer, Matt Gurney, Michael Harris,
Erica Ifill, Joe Jordan, Rose LeMay, Alex Marland,
Arthur Milnes, Tim Powers, Susan Riley,
Ken Rubin, Josie Sabatino, Bhagwant Sandhu,
Evan Sotiropoulos, Scott Taylor, Lori Turnbull,
Nelson Wiseman, and Les Whittington**ADVERTISING****VICE PRESIDENT MARKETING AND
MULTIMEDIA SALES**

Steve MacDonald

**DIRECTORS OF BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT**Ulle Baum, Craig Caldbeck, Erveina Gosalci, and
Martin Reaume**DIGITAL AND DESIGN****CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER**

David Little

SENIOR WEB DEVELOPER

Nick Vakulenko

DIGITAL AND PRODUCTION MANAGER

Joey Sabourin

SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Neena Singhal

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Naomi Wildeboer

ADMINISTRATION**HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER**

Tracey Wale

SUBSCRIPTIONS**MARKETING DIRECTOR**

Chris Rivoire

**LOYALTY AND
SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER**

Melanie Grant

OFFICE AND CIRCULATION MANAGER

Irma Guarneros

SALES CONSULTANTSBrendan MacKay
Puran Guram**DELIVERY INQUIRIES**circulation@hilltimes.com
613-688-8821**Published every Monday and
Wednesday by Hill Times
Publishing Inc.**246 Queen Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E4
(613) 232-5952
Fax (613) 232-9055
Canadian Publications Mail Agreement No. 40068926
www.hilltimes.comPlease send letters to the editor to
the above street address or e-mail
to news@hilltimes.com. Deadline is
Wednesday at noon, Ottawa time,
for the Monday edition and Friday
at noon for the Wednesday edition.
Please include your full name,
address and daytime phone number.
The Hill Times reserves the right to
edit letters. Letters do not reflect the
views of *The Hill Times*. Thank you.Publications Mail Agreement No. 40068926
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN
ADDRESSES TO: CIRCULATION DEPT.
246 Queen Street Suite 200, Ottawa, ON
K1P 5E4

Editorial

Editorial

Smith's request to U.S. swings dangerously close to an ask for foreign interference

A long time ago, in the heady days of 2024, Canada's 13 premiers sat together in Halifax with a simple message for the federal government: butt out of our jurisdictions.

But ever since U.S. President Donald Trump began threatening Canada's economy and sovereignty, the provincial leaders have begun to dabble in foreign affairs in one of the most egregious displays of "rules for thee, but not for me" in recent memory.

Chief among those leading the charge into the global arena is Ontario Premier Doug Ford whose forthright approach to the threats against his province's auto, steel, and aluminum sectors has been of questionable success, but has nevertheless made his mark in this dangerous new reality.

Then there is Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, who appears to have appointed herself Canada's ambassador to the more odious corners of the American far-right ecosystem. Last week, she was due to appear on stage in Florida alongside podcaster and culture warrior Ben Shapiro, who has described Canada as a "silly country," and posted support for Canada to be annexed by the United States and its citizens deprived of the right to vote in Canadian elections.

Smith defended the trip in the Alberta legislature last week by saying she would do all she can to reach out to Americans and change their minds

about tariffs. But appearing alongside a man calling for her fellow citizens to be disenfranchised and subjugated at a fundraiser is raising eyebrows.

Attracting even more attention, however, is an interview on far-right outlet Breitbart in which Smith asked Washington to put tariffs on pause during the Canadian federal election campaign, noting that "it's actually caused an increase in the support for the Liberals." Smith went on to say that Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre was "very much in sync" with the direction of the U.S. under Trump.

In an era where attempted foreign interference in Canada's elections is of great concern, to say such a request to the Americans was unwise is an understatement. Smith defended her comments by stating that she'd asked the Americans *not* to do something, something the provincial NDP did not buy.

In terms of appeals to foreign powers during an election, Smith's request was not as egregious as Trump's own ask for "Russia, you're listening" to find and release the emails of his Democratic opponent in 2016. But it has left behind questions about her judgment, a headache for the federal Conservatives, and a boon for the Liberals.

Smith might be better off taking the advice generations of Alberta politicians have offered to Ottawa: respect federal-provincial boundaries.

The Hill Times



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Letters to the Editor



Canada should invest in Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance: letter writer

Canada has the ability to make a change, and it baffles me how slow moving we are with our government's actions.

Speaking from the perspective of an Asian female teenager, I know what it feels like to be shoved into the role of a minority. No one should ever have to feel less than because of something they cannot control.

Canada can leverage its global influence to help mobilize support and solidarity from other countries where individuals are suffering—not by their own choice, but due to the lack of assistance from those around them.

As G7 president in 2025, Canada has the opportunity to stay true to its values and invest in organizations like Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance to ensure the immunization of more than 500 million children, support the elimination of cervical cancer through vaccinations against the human papillomavirus and boost global health security by standing ready to respond to 150 disease outbreaks.

We truly have no more time to waste. It's time to take action—now.

**Bernice Ko
Vancouver, B.C.**

We need to keep the CBC alive and well: letter writer

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 U.S. 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 information, news, and entertainment that speaks to our daily realities and reaffirms our 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—either 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 Nightingale
Ottawa, Ont.**

COMMENT

With friends like Danielle Smith, Pierre Poilievre doesn't need enemies

Liberals are positioned to fight Donald Trump. Thanks to Alberta's premier, the Conservatives seem to be 'in sync' with him.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—With friends like Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre needs no enemies.

In the first week of a very short federal election campaign, Smith managed to solidify the ballot question in the Liberals' favour.

Her major gaffe involved an intervention with the White

House, asking American officials to delay tariffs until after the election because that would help Poilievre. Smith stated Poilievre was "in sync" with U.S. President Donald Trump.

All this was recorded in an interview Smith gave to Breitbart, a right-wing podcast that's been advocating a constitutional amendment to make Trump president for life.

Instead of apologizing for foreign interference in an election, when confronted, Smith simply doubled down and claimed this was her lobbying effort for Canada.

The Alberta New Democrats did not agree, organizing the unveiling of a Canada flag in front of the Alberta legislature to underscore their belief in our country.

Smith added insult to injury by flying to Florida on March 27 to headline an extremist American fundraiser for an Islamophobic group that, according to Alberta NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi, denies the history of slavery.

Smith was set to share the stage with Ben Shapiro, who has called Canada "a silly country" and the "Puerto Rico of the North." Shapiro believes that Canada should be annexed as the 51st state without the right to vote.

Despite multiple requests to cancel her trip, Smith spoke in the Alberta legislature where she blamed the controversy on Liberals because the federal government had asked premiers to join in an all-in tariff lobbying effort.

Smith claimed the opposition to her Florida fundraiser came from eastern Canadian media elites, and the Liberals and New Democrats. She insisted that Albertans supported her.

The more she speaks out, the more Canadians learn about the deep ties between Canada's Conservatives and MAGA supporters south of the border.

With the American vice-president joining his wife on an uninvited trip to Greenland, Canadians are taking the annexation threat very seriously.

Trump has refused to rule out the use of force to take over the

island, but the local appetite for annexation is close to zero.

In the recent election, only one per cent of Greenland voters supported a party that promoted unification discussions. That party was the only one that did not get a single seat in parliament.

Back in this country, the ballot question for the April 28 election appears to be a vote on which leader is best placed to fight American tariffs and annexation.

Poilievre is trying to portray himself as the person with the chops to fight Trump's tariffs, but quisling Smith's cosy relationship with extremist Trump supporters is killing that narrative. Smith's position is not lost on Canadian voters, and has helped to send Tory polling numbers downward.

The turnaround for the Liberals has been nothing short of astonishing. It is so positive that even a former Nova Scotia minister who left politics for "family reasons" made a surprise decision to return. Sean Fraser said last week it was a personal request from the leader that made him reverse his retirement decision, even though a successor for his riding nomination had already been chosen.

Other star candidates like a former mayor of Vancouver, the former acting mayor of Toronto, and well-known journalists Evan Solomon and Anthony Germain have jumped into the fray for the Liberals as the party's popularity continues to rise.

The first week of the campaign has Liberals on a high.

Polling numbers across multiple platforms show that Prime Minister Mark Carney has eliminated Poilievre's lead, and has moved to top spot.

The NDP has felt the pain of this Liberal swing because polls show leader Jagmeet Singh moving to single digits.

As Trump continues to threaten more tariffs and annexation, Liberal numbers continue to rise. Carney is viewed as the best choice to stare down the American president.

When it comes to the question of affordability, the Conservative leader fares best.

But it looks as though the ballot question will be who is best equipped to fight the United States. Carney's massive resumé beats Poilievre's by a mile.

Trump just added 25-per-cent tariffs to the automobile sector, and that is a huge blow to the Canadian economy.

As a pre-emptive strike, Carney announced a plan to fight the tariffs with a \$2-billion auto industry fund the morning before Trump's announcement. Poilievre was campaigning on tax cuts for seniors.

Liberals are positioned to fight Trump. Thanks to Smith, Tories seem to be in tight with him.

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

The Hill Times

Good vibrations: why vibes matter in this election campaign

Social media puts emotion much more front and centre. Unfortunately, for Pierre Poilievre, the vibes surrounding him for the past few weeks have been largely negative.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKAVILLE, ONT.—As his federal election campaign gets underway, Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre must worry about more than just Liberal attack ads.

He also must be concerned about "bad vibes."

And, yes, vibes are now a thing in politics.

In fact, you'll often hear pundits, journalists, and other polit-



Liberal Leader Mark Carney, left, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre. Thanks to the emergence of social media platforms, 'vibe politics' is more important than ever, writes Gerry Nicholls. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade, Wikimedia Commons, and illustration by Naomi Wildeboer

ical observers comment on the vibes surrounding a politician.

It's a term used to describe the overall mood, atmosphere, or feeling associated with a particular politician or with a political party.

In other words, it's more of an emotional perception than a quantitative analysis.

Mind you, there's nothing new about emotional perceptions playing a role in politics.

Indeed, since ancient Athens, emotion has pervaded the democratic decision-making process, as people typically tend to make political choices with their hearts rather than with their intellects.

But nowadays, thanks to the emergence of social media platforms, "vibe politics" is more important than ever.

Simply put, social media, with its massive reach, its speed of communication and its simplistic messaging, makes it much easier for "hot-take" emotional views to quickly spread throughout the entire political ecosystem.

This is why vibes matter: social media puts emotion much more front and centre.

Unfortunately, for Poilievre, the vibes surrounding him for the past few weeks have been largely negative.

In fact, you can't open a newspaper these days without seeing a negative headline about his political prospects.

Here's a sampling: "The Conservative Leader seems broken," "Pierre Poilievre might have punched himself out," "Mark Carney's arrival looks like trouble for Pierre Poilievre," "Conservatives crumble, Liberals surge."

You can't help but get the sense that Poilievre has already lost the election, that he's the captain of a sinking ship.

Certainly, I sense this has demoralized many of his supporters.

Just to add some anecdotal evidence, some of my conservative friends have told me they think Poilievre is in trouble.

Make no mistake, this is a serious issue for the Conservatives.

As a political consultant friend of mine used to say, "truth doesn't matter in politics, what matters is the perception of truth."

And right now, the perception is that Poilievre is heading in the wrong direction, which will make it difficult for him to win over voters.

Nobody, after all, wants to be part of a losing cause.

This is likely why the Liberals called a snap election; they want

to take advantage of Poilievre's bad vibe situation.

So, does all this mean that Poilievre and the Conservatives are cooked?

Is it already all over, as many seem to believe?

The answer is no; in my opinion, at least, Poilievre is still in it.

I say that because we need to keep in mind that, emotion and vibes aside, the Conservative leader is still in a pretty good position.

Yes, some polls show the Liberals with an ever-widening lead, but others show a much tighter race.

For instance, on the eve of the race, pollster Nick Nanos noted the Liberals and Conservatives are in dead heat and predicted the election will be like a "knife fight in a telephone booth."

In such a tough, "coin flip" election, things can change quickly, due to any number of variables.

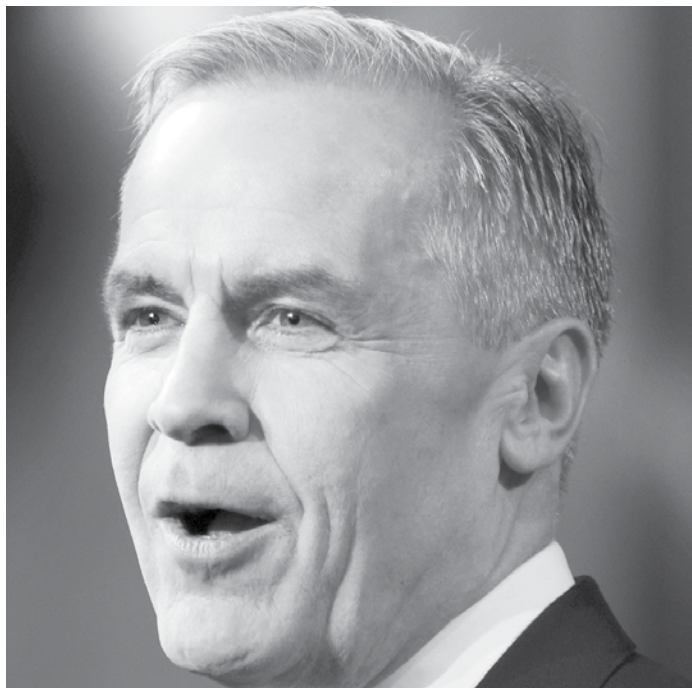
One such variable, for example, is Prime Minister Mark Carney, who, aside from his Liberal leadership win, has never fought an election in his life. Will his political inexperience cause him to commit errors in the heat of electoral combat?

It's also possible NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh might steal back some progressive voters from the Liberals, blunting Carney's apparent momentum.

So, the battle for good vibes is just beginning.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, left, and Prime Minister Mark Carney. Canadians have consistently answered the most pressing issue facing the country the same way: Carney is the better choice to deal with Trump's tariffs, tantrums, and threats, than any other candidate on offer. Poilievre has made no headway here, writes Michael Harris. *The Hill Times* photographs by Sam Garcia

Carney is asking Canadians to give him a majority to deal with Trump

A few months ago, only people who were smoking the drapes would have thought a Liberal majority possible. Now, who knows?

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—Driving into my hometown, there is a sign at the Four Corners in a farmer's field. It reads "Mr. Trump. Don't poke the Goose." It's the Canada Goose, of course.

The words are directed at U.S. President Donald Trump, the belligerent insomniac who can't stop threatening Canada. The Tariff Sheriff has now added a 25-per-cent tariff on all cars made in Canada. Trump also says he

wants Canada's auto parts sector to move to the United States.

That goes along with a general 25-per-cent levy on all goods from Canada going into the U.S.

And a 25-per-cent tariff on steel and aluminum.

And just around the corner, another blast at the world's economy with his so-called "reciprocal" tariffs. They are to be announced on April 2, what Trump refers to as "Liberation Day." One moment these tariffs are on, then they're off on certain sectors or products, then they're paused, then they're back on again.

As if that weren't enough, Trump recently threatened on Truth Social that if Canada allies itself with the European Union and hurts the U.S. economy in any way, he will get even.

"If the European Union works with Canada in order to do economic harm to the U.S., large scale tariffs, far larger than currently planned, will be placed on them both in order to protect the best friend that each of those two countries has ever had."

The last line would be funny if it were not so viciously delusional. The guy who started this trade war

seems to believe no one should fight back, no matter how unjust or egregious his assaults become.

Trump's predatory insolence isn't just economic. He has openly suggested he plans to take over Greenland where he is the proverbial skunk at the garden party.

The Americans are so unpopular on the world's largest island that when U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance and his wife planned to visit, all public events were moved to an American military base.

And Greenland isn't Trump's only target for a land and resource grab befitting Russian President Vladimir Putin. Trump also routinely suggests annexing Canada as America's 51st state. He keeps calling our prime minister a "governor."

Talk about poking the goose.

Trump's shakedown of his own allies has already had a profound effect on this country, and the current federal election.

The U.S. president has touched off a stirring burst of public patriotism in the Great White North, a side to the national character that is usually well disguised. Now it's "elbows up" for Canada, and "go pleasure yourself" to Trump.

issue facing the country the same way: Carney is the better choice to deal with Trump's tariffs, tantrums, and threats, than any other candidate on offer.

That's partly because of his experience as governor of two central banks, and his deep credentials in the private financial sector. But Carney's also been crystal clear that he understands what Trump is up to, and knows how to call a spade a spade.

Carney called Trump's tariffs on cars made in this country a "direct attack" on Canada and its autoworkers. He announced a \$2-billion fund to back up workers if worse comes to worst.

He also said the ties between our two countries are being broken by the president's actions. Carney signalled that he will be talking to Trump in the coming days—and reserving the right to impose retaliatory tariffs, once he has seen the details of the president's executive "disorder."

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has made no headway in convincing Canadians that he is the best person to face down Trump.

That's partially because he is so Trump-like. He specializes in the politics of personal attack and innuendo. He refers to the PM as "Sneaky Carney" or "Carbon Tax Carney." And how interesting that Poilievre's pet slogan "Canada First" is an unmistakable echo of Donald Trump's "America First" motto.

Poilievre appeared to catch a break when Trump recently mused that the Conservative leader was not MAGA, and it might be easier to deal with the Liberals rather than the Conservatives. Poilievre's campaign was quick to take to social media to massage the president's offhand rambling into proof he was the better choice to face off with Trump.

But whatever help Trump's quip might have given to Poilievre's credibility as a tough negotiator was swiftly removed by the partisan meddling of Alberta Premier Danielle Smith.

Smith, who has consistently chosen province over country in the trade war with the Americans, made an astonishing admission Breitbart News.

Smith said in an interview that she had asked officials in the Trump administration to put the tariffs on hold until after the Canadian election.

Why?

Because the tariff issue had boosted support for Carney and the Liberals. Alberta's NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi nailed it when he said Smith was doing nothing less than inviting a foreign country to interfere in Canada's election. Bad enough we have to worry about China and Russia. But Alberta?

Smith also told administration officials that Poilievre was "very much in sync" with the Trump administration. Those words could very easily be Poilievre's political epitaph in election 2025.

With Trump now public enemy No. 1 in Canada, being seen as his political kid brother is not likely to please the goose.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times



Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured March 23, 2025, after holding a press conference outside Rideau Hall in Ottawa after dissolving Parliament and calling an election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Bread, not circuses: dwindling appetite for politics as usual is helping Carney

If polls and general chatter are accurate, voters may be ready for more content, less contempt.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



Prime Minister Mark Carney will probably never be a spell-binding public speaker, at least judging by his first tentative forays. When he takes to the podium, he delivers his message with all the flair, passion, and levity of a central banker addressing a meeting of the International Metallurgy and Materials Congress. Unsurprising, given his resumé.

But press conferences? He is brilliant when the questions start coming.

This is taking some getting used to in the early days of this campaign. We (the media, the public) are so accustomed to former prime minister Justin Trudeau's meandering diversions down flower-strewn lanes, and to Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's cyanide-laced, *ad hominem* attacks on rivals—and apple-munching disdain for his

questioners—that many of us stopped listening years ago.

Carney actually answers questions, thoroughly and mostly respectfully. He sometimes even responds in bullet points. He says, in effect: here is what we are doing to rebuild Canada's military (to take one recent example). Then he lists his government's ambitions, with rough timelines and reasonable-sounding objectives, and the promise of detailed costing in the final Liberal platform. These commitments include, among other things, larger wage increases for Armed Forces personnel than those already promised, new ice-breakers and drones, a review of the F-35 fighter jet program, and military procurement focused on using Canadian steel, aluminum, and labour.

Nothing new here, you might think, and some promises are holdovers from Trudeau's last, desperate months. The difference is that Carney doesn't boast, evade, or oversell. He simply says what he wants to do; he repeatedly emphasizes "action" and urgency, and, for once, that's not hyperbole. We are living in an urgent moment.

"It has taken too long to get important projects done," he says, repeatedly, an unmistakable criticism of the previous government. He proposes a "first mile fund" to build access to remote mining sites, one environmental review

rather than two, and provincial-federal-Indigenous collaboration, but with an emphasis on "speed" (not unlike Poilievre's approach). What, if anything, might be lost in the rush is, presumably, another generation's problem.

To be cynical, Carney hasn't yet given us reason to doubt his sincerity. He is too new to politics.

Nor has he been error-free. Early on, he responded in a prickly tone to a reporter's question about potential conflicts of interest, given his wide exposure to wealthy corporations in his previous life. Since then, he seems to be weathering ongoing questions about his financial affairs with more equanimity, if not with fully-transparent responses. He also referred to the party's star Montreal candidate, Nathalie Prevost, a survivor of the Polytechnique massacre, by the wrong name and mistakenly referred to Concordia. He later apologized, but the *faux pas* suggested a lack of familiarity with Quebec to some, although not to Prevost, who called it a simple mistake, "a typo".

Nor is he innocent of inserting zingers against Poilievre into every speech. These feel scripted, part of a tiresome campaign pattern—perhaps urged upon him by various old hands? There is much to criticize about the opposition leader, of course, but most Canadians already have Poil-

ievre's measure. If the opposition leader does, or says, anything newly outlandish, that would call for a detailed rebuttal. Otherwise, Carney risks sounding like just another insult machine, and politics already has enough of those.

In fact, if polls and general chatter are accurate, voters may be ready for more content, less contempt. And Carney has been delivering content, all under the towering shadow of U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff threats. He will make employment insurance easier to access for those whose jobs are threatened; he is offering a modest middle-class income tax cut; he will press businesses to buy Canadian materials; he has achieved at least partial support from premiers for removing interprovincial trade barriers; he is encouraging large projects, including new pipelines, gas plants, carbon capture and storage; and that oft-talked-about rail line from Quebec City to Toronto.

Promises are cheap, they say—except in politics, where they are often very expensive. Poilievre is countering with many of his own, after months of keeping his cards close to his chest. His income tax cut is larger ("income tax is the fine you pay for the crime of working hard", as he likes to say, echoing his Chicago School mentors.) His GST tax break for homes worth under \$1.3 million is also more generous than the Liberal offer. He is also recycling some Greatest Hits of the Right, including more money for trades (Boots, not Suits), replacing a "woke" with a "warrior" culture in the military, reducing the size of the public service and slashing outside consultants, and cutting foreign aid.

Poilievre has been forced, by public demand, to retain the Liberal dental care plan, although it would be frozen to current levels, and some version of child care although not, presumably, more public child care spaces. Last week, on a visit to Quebec, he was also at pains to underscore that he would not increase the retirement age to 67 from 65, and would allow seniors to keep their savings in

registered retirement plans to the age of 73 instead of 71.

In short, both main campaigns are offering daily inducements to weary, worried, cash-strapped voters intended to make lives more affordable and more secure. This is how campaigns always unroll. But, with rare exceptions, voters don't choose a side based on how big the tax cut will be, or, much less, on "strategies" to "fortify the Canadian supply chain" in the auto sector.

This election, especially, polls suggest voters are looking for sobriety over slogans, for someone with the intelligence, nerve, and subtlety to handle the most dangerous and unpredictable American president in living memory. That description favours Carney and, aware of that, Conservatives are trying to discredit the Liberal leader personally.

But the "scandals"—even by modest Canadian standards—are so far-fetched, complicated and low-impact that there is little chance they will change minds or affect the outcome. (It's not as if someone is marketing custom bitcoin, or peddling cars on the lawn at Parliament Hill.)

This includes ongoing questions about Poilievre's refusal to get a security clearance and revelations that his 2022 leadership campaign was aided by agents of the Indian government. While bewildering, Poilievre's refusal as likely stems from stubbornness as from guile. A CSIS report found no evidence that he knew about the Indian interference and, in any event, it would have had a marginal influence on his crushing leadership victory. As for Carney, Brookfield, the investment firm he chaired, made a loan to a Chinese business and two green investment funds in Bermuda, an international tax haven—a haven also enjoyed by Canadian pension funds and Quebec's Caisse de Depot.

To extrapolate from these common, legal—if inequitable—business practices that Carney is somehow beholden to China, or hiding tax revenue that should be paid in Canada, defies credulity. If he wanted to become richer than he already is, he would have stayed in his previous job; no one goes into politics in this country to make billions, unlike in the oligarchy to the south.

Of course, the race is still unfolding, Poilievre is drawing large and enthusiastic crowds and things can change—perhaps in the wake of tariffs coming soon. But there doesn't appear to be any appetite in this country for more chaos, for ideologically-driven revenge, and that is what Poilievre has been touting for months. He would fire the bank of Canada governor—does anyone remember why?—kill CBC television, shrink the public service, sell off federal properties, abandon any prospect of containing climate change.

We've seen what that kind of top-down surgery has done to people's lives and livelihoods in the U.S. For many engaged voters here the response is clear: thanks, but no thanks.

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

The Hill Times

Can Canada afford to cut the public service while Trump moves the goalposts?

Shifting trade threats will force tough choices about cuts and the public service's role as payroll costs rise and the deficit hits \$50-billion.

Kathryn May



Canada's public service has never been bigger. And the calls to shrink it have never been louder. But how and when does the next government cut public-service spending with a U.S. president who keeps shifting the goalposts of his economic warfare against Canada?

Cutting spending and jobs is never easy—it eats up time and energy, triggers union battles, and disrupts departments. Buyouts and severance cost money, and deeper cuts inevitably hit services, including our critical social safety net.

Some critics blame this country's productivity decline on public-sector growth. The public sector for all levels of government now makes up nearly 40 per cent of GDP. Productivity has steadily fallen as the public sector has expanded, the International Monetary Fund notes, fueling debate over its role in the slowdown.

The federal workforce has grown faster than ever in the last decade, up 43 per cent to a record high. Its payroll topped \$65-billion in 2023-24. The average full-time employee now costs \$136,345. That is up 15.7 per cent from the previous year.

That's a tempting target for any government looking to rein in spending.

Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux says the government is caught in a fiscal squeeze.

It's facing a \$50.1-billion deficit. Tariffs alone will reduce the GDP by two per cent, which reduces tax revenues. The government has promised to help people and industries hit by the tariffs. NATO's defence-spending target is two per cent of GDP, but is set to rise higher.

Add in campaign pledges, talk of major infrastructure projects—from rail and pipelines to military upgrades for promised nation-building—and the next

Public Service Alliance of Canada members on strike in April 2023. PSAC, the biggest federal public service union, is tapping into the wave of national unity with a 'For You, Canada' campaign to save public services from cuts. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



government has some big budget tradeoffs to make over the next five to 10 years.

Giroux says a wildcard like U.S. President Donald Trump—with his constantly shifting trade threats—"throws a monkey's wrench into any party's fiscal tracks." With Canada-U.S. relations in historic flux, a key factor in the country's financial outlook keeps changing, making it tough to stick to targets, election promises, or set a stable fiscal path.

With all the uncertainty and spending pressures, the math simply won't add up without public-service cuts, says Sahir Khan, vice president of the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy at the University of Ottawa.

Whether the next government reshuffles spending to fund new priorities or cuts it to shrink the deficit, public servants can't escape the knife.

But Khan says major cuts—or any big fiscal decisions—are unlikely for now because the landscape is too uncertain. The government needs a clearer picture of whether Trump's tariffs and policies are here to stay before setting priorities. Until the goalposts stop shifting, committing to a long-term fiscal plan is tough.

"We are in a vacuum right now. I stand by the statement that a \$65-billion payroll is going to be attractive, but the problems are so much bigger than that. You have to solve for the policy require-

ment first before you get at the size of your payroll," he says.

It's not just about jobs. There's a social and economic value to programs and services. They complement what the private sector does. They fill the gaps left by the private sector, like spending for the military, national security, and border control.

The biggest federal union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), is tapping into the wave of national unity ignited by Trump's trade shocks, launching a "For You, Canada" campaign to save public services from cuts.

"When the world feels uncertain—with reckless tariffs putting our jobs at risk and our very sovereignty under attack—you can count on Canada's public service to be there when people need them most," says PSAC President Sharon DeSousa.

Jennifer Robson, an associate professor in political management at Carleton University, says it's "kind of dumb" to obsess over the headcount of the public service. What's important is the function, what it's doing, and the problems it solves.

As a result, the calls for a spending review have never been stronger.

A big push is for one modelled on the Chrétien government's "getting government right" program review in the mid-1990s. It looked at the role of government with an eye on what programs

to keep and what to stop doing, eliminating the deficit and cutting 50,000 jobs.

Cuts shouldn't drive the agenda, says Khan. The size of government should be based on policy goals, budget realities, and the capacity of the public service to deliver services effectively. That also means fixing the way the public service works and manages.

The real test for the next government will be whether the public service has the delivery capacity to match the crisis and the government's response, says Khan. Without that, policy and fiscal decisions have "no transmission mechanism," no way to turn plans into results.

But it will be a policy choice, says Giroux.

"An incoming government that wants to have different priorities may just want to reallocate. But if they want to find savings within the public service, then they'll probably have to do some surgical cuts, at least, maybe deeper cuts," says Giroux.

Neither Prime Minister Mark Carney nor Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has fleshed out their policies, but there are signs of divergence.

Carney has promised to rein in spending by balancing the government's operating budget—which includes the \$65-billion payroll—in three years, while running a small deficit with a capital

budget, which would include long-term investments.

He's talked about a spending review, and using technology and AI to make operations more efficient. But he says he will cap the public service while Poilievre says it will be cut at least at the rate of attrition.

It's unclear whether Carney means the size of the public service or its payroll costs when he talks about a cap. The public service now has 441,000 people. Payroll costs will grow with annual pay increases. Capping \$65-billion payroll costs would decrease spending as inflation eats away at it.

But Alasdair Roberts, who predicted Canada's sovereignty crisis in his book *The Adaptable Country*, says Trump's tariff and annexation threats are just the beginning. Canada will face bigger geopolitical and economic shocks in the coming decades.

"This isn't the whole story. This isn't the shock. This is only one of the shocks," he warns.

As much as the world has changed, politics remains the same, reactive and driven by events, says Roberts. He has long argued Canada needs a "national conversation" about what it wants to be and how to get there. He's a strong advocate for royal commissions.

But he fears the election will push parties into quick fixes and short-term platforms, locking the country into policy priorities without a long-term strategy. That would also sideline the public service, which brings continuity, institutional memory, and non-partisanship—critical for preparing for the next crisis.

He supports a 1990s-style program review, but warns the public service faces "deferred maintenance," and needs major reforms in how it operates and manages itself.

And he warns that Canadians' unity—their resolve to fight Trump and to build a more independent country—will weaken if the economy slows or enters a recession. Politics will turn nastier, internal divisions will deepen.

Add to that climate emergencies, the possibility of war, and the fact that Canada—home to just 40 million people—holds a disproportionate share of the world's fresh water, critical minerals, and habitable land. That makes it a target.

"The question will be: why does Canada have all this stuff?" Roberts says. "That's essentially what President Trump is asking. We shouldn't expect international law or diplomatic norms to stop powerful countries—even those we thought were our friends—from doing what they think is necessary to preserve their country."

This article was first published in *Policy Options* on March 20, and republished with permission. Kathryn May is a reporter and the *Accenture* fellow on the *Future of the Public Service*, providing coverage and analysis of the complex issues facing Canada's federal public service for *Policy Options*.

The Hill Times

At the forefront of health policy.



Get the tools you need to work effectively on health policy.



Never miss a shift, a strategy or a development.



Know who is working on the files that matter to you.



Hill Times Health is your 360° view of everything connected to health policy on Parliament Hill: in-depth news, events, daily announcements and regulatory updates.

HILLTIMES
HEALTH



Receive up-to-date health news in your inbox with a **free trial to Hill Times Health** by scanning the QR code or visiting hilltimesresearch.ca



Pro-pipeline demonstrators on the Hill on Feb. 19, 2019. Even the world's biggest petrostate, Saudi Arabia, recognizes that it can't rely on oil and gas to keep it afloat, and is busy diversifying away from its reliance on oil. We must as well, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada needs more than oil and gas to keep the country afloat

We should pursue an increasingly ambitious and potentially much more prosperous and diversified economy. But if our priorities and capital are tied up in raw materials alone, we'll have a diminished future.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—If the oil and gas industry and Alberta Premier Danielle Smith believe Canada should abandon the climate commitments for 2030 it made at the Paris climate summit in 2015—originally made by then-prime minister Stephen Harper—as well as the new commitments made in February for the period to 2035, then they should be upfront and say so directly. The same is true if they reject net-zero emissions by 2050.

Breaking Canada's climate pledges seems to be their intent, judging by their calls for massive new investments in pipelines and fossil fuel projects based on much relaxed regulation, even to the point where industry executives are demanding that the federal government declare a national emergency to bypass regulatory requirements.

Canada, under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, has committed to bring down emissions by 45-50 per cent by 2035, compared to 2005 levels. Our country is the world's 12th largest emitter. However, climate policies have pointed us in the right direction: our per capita emissions in 2023 were 71 per cent of 2005's emissions, with 81 per cent of emissions coming from the energy sector.

In a recent commentary in *The National Post*, Derek Burney argues that "oil is our primary source of economic growth" and will be for decades to come. He posits Canada's future as one based on raw materials, not just oil and gas, and for world markets, not just the United States. Conveniently, he and others argue that our excessive dependence on the U.S. market is somehow the federal government's fault. But it was the industry—not the federal government—that for decades led this focus on North American energy infrastructure.

Moreover, the industry is as strong as it is today in large part, from its early days, based on extraordinarily generous federal tax subsidies, the creation for a time of an oil market which forced Ontario to pay prices higher than the world price for oil, high investments in oil-sands technology R&D, federal subsidies, leadership to create Syncrude—which launched the oilsands industry—and, most recently, tax incentives and risk-reduction subsidies to support carbon capture and storage.

Nor, contrary to the critics, has Ottawa prevented recent diversification of oil and gas markets. There would have been no expansion of the Trans Mountain oil pipeline to open up markets to Asia without a massive federal economic commitment of more than \$10-billion, and construction of LNG plants on the West Coast benefit from tax incentives and federal subsidies.

A recent *The Globe and Mail* article argued, in response to the lobbying to reduce regulation of fossil fuel projects, that "there is no such thing as a free lunch." While regulatory practices can be improved and there are strong commitments this will happen, "Canadians should be wary of calls to hastily dismantle environmental regulations to primarily further private interests at the expense of public ones," argue the University of Calgary's Mar-

tin Olszynski and Julien Beaulieu, a lawyer currently at Imperial College in London, U.K. There is a cost to the race to the bottom in regulatory provision and, in fact, Canadians have already paid a high cost from climate change. We face even higher costs in the future for mitigation and adaptation.

While future forecasts of climate change are not 100-per cent certain, they have a high level of confidence. This is the collective conclusion of climatologists from around the world, and should be taken seriously. Since 1988, climate scientists have been working through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to provide governments with assessments of climate change, the impact, and mitigation and adaptation options.

The most recent report, in 2023, concluded that "human activities, primarily through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming" with global surface temperatures continuing to rise due to "unsustainable energy use, land use and land-use change, lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production across regions, between and within countries, and among individuals." The report expressed "high confidence" in these conclusions.

Human activity and the rise in both emissions and temperature have been major drivers of heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts and tropical storms, the report said, adding, with high confidence, that "human influence has likely increased the chance of compound extreme events since the 1950s, including increase in the frequency of concurrent heatwaves and droughts." This could all make life even more difficult in the future. It found that the largest share and growth in emissions came from fossil fuel—coal,

oil, and natural gas—combustion and industrial processes.

Climate is not the only issue. It's noteworthy that the advocates of our nation as a raw materials economy rarely mention the potential for processing and creating higher value from our resources here in Canada instead of simply exporting raw materials. If we have so much oil and gas, why don't we have a much better developed chemicals industry? Why don't we have an industrial strategy that focuses on extracting a much higher value from our resources instead of just taking stuff out of the ground and shipping to others to generate value?

And then there's the much bigger question of what kind of economy our country wants—and needs—for shared prosperity. The world is advancing into a new industrial revolution of knowledge-based industries based on challenging new technologies: from AI and quantum computing, to biotechnology and green technology, underpinned by intellectual property and data. In pursuing green technology, for example, China has become a world leader in solar and wind power, electric vehicles, processing of rare earths and batteries.

Instead of simply looking to fossil fuels to keep our country afloat, we should pursue an increasingly ambitious and potentially much more prosperous and diversified economy. But if our priorities and capital are tied up in raw materials alone, we will have a diminished future. Even the world's biggest petrostate, Saudi Arabia, recognizes that. And it's busy diversifying away from its reliance on oil. We must as well.

David Crane can be reached at crane@interlog.com.
The Hill Times

The Hill Times Policy Briefing | March 31, 2025

INFRASTRUCTURE

**Canada needs
to modernize its
infrastructure,
be a global leader**

**BUILDING
INFRASTRUCTURE
TO WITHSTAND EFFECTS OF
*climate change***

**CANADA'S
EXPERIENCING
challenges to
transition to
ELECTRIC VEHICLES**

**SO, WE ALL AGREE
*on what needs to
happen next:*
GET IT DONE**

**TRADE
INFRASTRUCTURE:
**SEIZE THE
moment****

**TELECOM'S
ESSENTIAL ROLE
IN SECURING
**Canada's
future****

INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing

Trade infrastructure pulls ahead of housing crisis as election priority, says industry experts



NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, Liberal Leader Mark Carney, Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, and Green Party co-leaders Elizabeth May and Jonathan Pedneault. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and illustration by Joey Sabourin

The Canadian Construction Association said ‘In this federal election, construction will no longer be ignored,’ in a March 27 press release.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Party leaders’ promises in the lead up to the federal election show a priority shift towards trade infrastructure and away from housing infrastructure, but more details and long-term plans are still needed, according to industry experts.

“With what happened with our friend—or ex-friend—down [south] of the border, trade infrastructure is becoming more of an issue. But that being said, we still are in the middle of a housing crisis in Canada,” said Rodrigue Gilbert, president of the Canadian Construction Association (CCA). “Every infrastructure announcement is good news ... but it’s still fairly short-term. It’s not looking at the next 25 years.”

Canada’s 45th general election will be held on April 28. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre took aim at infrastructure needs on March 20 by announcing his plan to “unleash hundreds of billions of dollars of investment” through creation of “shovel-ready zones” with pre-approved construction permits for major resource or energy projects. According to Poilievre,

a Conservative government would identify locations suitable for a power station, liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant, pipeline, or other major project, and then work with other levels of government to lock down zoning and permits in advance of construction, if it is safe to do so.

Prime Minister Mark Carney followed on March 21 with his own announcements related to infrastructure. To help fast-track infrastructure projects, the Liberal leader announced a “one window” approval process that would streamline approvals for “large-scale, national-interest infrastructure projects.” Carney also announced creation of a “First Mile Fund” to finance transportation networks to help connect energy extraction sites to rail lines and roads.

Gilbert said Poilievre and Carney’s respective announcements are good news, but still reflect short-term solutions for Canada’s infrastructure woes.

“I think there’s good stuff there. There’s no doubt about it, and we’ll take it, but we need a really longer-term plan. We always advocate 25 years,” he said. “Let’s say we get a big push on investment for four or five years, which is always good ... but then you shut it down for a few years [and] you’re losing your skills. You’re losing the people in the industry. People are doing something else, and ... when you lose these people, they just don’t come back.”

On March 27, the CCA launched a Construction for Canadians campaign calling for action on infrastructure investment and development during the federal election. In a press release, Gilbert said that the next



Kevin Lee, CEO of the Canadian Home Builders Association, says, ‘One thing we do know is that housing is a priority for Canadians, and therefore, will it be a priority in the election? We know it’s definitely running second to things like the trade war, and that’s understandable.’ *Photograph courtesy of CHBA*



Lindsay Kislock, president and CEO of the Western Transportation Advisory Council, says, ‘We need to get our goods moving to market. If the federal government is going to provide some capital to do that, that would be great. But how much is that? What is that like?’ *Photograph courtesy of WESTAC*

government must make “necessary and overdue investments” in infrastructure related to trade, as well as address workforce development and modernized procurement.

“In this federal election, construction will no longer

be ignored,” reads the CCA press release.

Kevin Lee, CEO of the Canadian Home Builders Association, told *The Hill Times* that it makes sense that trade infrastructure would become more prominent because of the current trade war with the

United States, but he added that he is still hopeful that housing-supportive infrastructure will be a key part of election campaigns.

“With all the emphasis on the trade war, those sort of big infrastructure projects around things like LNG and power and the like would obviously capture attention,” he said. “One thing we do know is that housing is a priority for Canadians, and, therefore, will it be a priority in the election? We know it’s definitely running second to things like the trade war, and that’s understandable, but we do expect that it’ll still be a part of whoever forms the next government’s policy platforms.”

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation estimated in June 2022 that about 3.5 million new housing units would be needed by 2030 to help achieve housing affordability for everyone living in the country, in addition to the 2.3 million units projected based on rates of construction at that time.

Lee said that estimate still holds true.

“You’re talking about building 5.8 million homes, and that’s more than doubling housing starts, and we’re nowhere near that right now. In fact, right now, housing starts are falling, so we have a long way to go to reverse that,” he said. “To build all those homes, we’re going to need more infrastructure, so it’s going to be important that we be smart about how we finance that as well.”

To address the housing issue, Lee said lowering development taxes would be “hugely important.”

“Those are municipal, but in some of our larger centers they have gotten completely out of control. In the GTA, you’re looking at numbers of like \$200,000 just in municipal development taxes on a typical home, which is a huge issue,” he said. “[The federal government] working with them to find alternate means is also a big part of getting them off the idea that taxing new developments—to the extent that they are—is a good idea because we’re seeing a big fall off in housing starts in Ontario and B.C. because they’re the worst offenders in terms of local development taxes.”

Lindsay Kislock, president and CEO of the Western Transportation Advisory Council (WESTAC), told *The Hill Times* that this election would be about how the goods and services on which Canadians rely are funded.

She said that the recent infrastructure announcements by Carney and Poilievre are short on details.

“I would be supportive of a first mile fund. We need to get our goods moving to market. If the federal government is going to provide some capital to do that, that would be great. But how much is that? What is that like? There are no details in that announcement, and I’ve looked for them and I can’t find them,” she said.

“He’s announced a first mile fund. So what? What is that, a dollar? Or is it \$100-million? I don’t know.”

Kislock said she was most interested in the “one window” approval process announced by Carney.

Policy Briefing **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Continued from page 16

“We have held-up projects in this country, like the ability to attract capital on projects. Our reputation is very poor,” she said. “There’s a general hesitancy, I think, on behalf of industry, to start large infrastructure projects because you have no idea of how long that permitting process is going to be and whether you’ll be successful. A one window approach for large scale infrastructure projects could potentially be exciting.”

Investment without a plan is a plan to fail, according to Kislack. She said among WESTAC members, the need for a transportation infrastructure plan emerges as the number two issue, behind dealing with the impacts of transportation disruptions.

“Why do we need that plan? Because we need that plan before we start spending money,” she said. “When Canada has been at its best, we have had federal-provincial initiatives like the [Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative] that brought the governments and industry together to plan and invest. The private sector brought their money to the table when they knew the governments were serious and they knew that there was a plan for infrastructure.”

John Allen, vice-president and national infrastructure practice lead for Global Public Affairs, told *The Hill Times* that when it comes to how federal parties look at infrastructure, “the narrative’s changed a little bit.”

“It was all about housing, I think, and unlocking housing—so, the investment in transit, the investment in water, sewer infrastructure—that’s morphed a little into trade now,” he said. “How do we enhance our ports, airports, cross-country trade connections, the trade corridors? ... but that housing piece hasn’t gone away.”

According to Allen, the real focus across the board is how to get projects built, and the kryptonite for the infrastructure sector is uncertain timelines.

“We’ve struggled to get projects built, so having a clear sense on the timelines—if people are coming forward and suggesting projects—is hugely important,” he said. “If you can ... hit the requirements in terms of environmental standards and community engagement and working with Indigenous communities, but provide certainty around timelines, that could be hugely impactful for the country.”

Sean Strickland, the executive director of Canada’s Building Trades Unions, told *The Hill Times* that he thinks infrastructure has become much more prevalent in this election than any previous campaign in



Sean Strickland, the executive director of Canada’s Building Trades Unions, says, “We’ve been telling the government ... what can we control? We can control what we spend our money on to build up Canadian industries, so infrastructure is important.” Photograph courtesy of Canada’s Building Trades Unions

recent memory, as a result of the implications of tariffs.

In an escalation of the trade war, U.S. President Donald Trump announced a 25-per-cent tariff on all foreign-made vehicles, set to take effect on April 2.

“If that comes into play, that’s going to be detrimental to our Ontario economy and to the Canadian economy,” said Strickland. “We’ve been telling the government ... what can we control? And we can control what we spend our money on to build up Canadian industries, so infrastructure is important. It’s particularly important when it comes to large-scale infrastructure to help get our natural resources to markets other than the United States.”

Strickland said Canada needs to look at large infrastructure projects, such as transportation corridors, pipelines, ports, and improve interprovincial trade and diversify the country’s markets globally.

“In order to reach [global markets], we’re going to have to look at our regulatory requirements. We’re going to have to find some regulatory efficiency,” he said. “We also need a Team Canada approach. There has got to be a recognition by all Canadians and all provincial and territorial governments that we need to work together on this to get this done. Our economic livelihood depends on it.”

jcnockaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

So, we all agree on what needs to happen next: let’s talk about how to get it done

Canada’s premiers have endorsed the principles of CTIP, recognizing infrastructure’s critical role in driving economic prosperity across all provinces and territories.

Rodrigue Gilbert

Opinion



The country has never been more united: **T**elbows up! Canadian politicians of every stripe agree that this country has two urgent economic priorities: diversifying our export markets to reduce our heavy reliance on a single, unpredictable trading partner; and breaking down internal trade barriers so goods and people can move freely across the country. But the real question is: are we ready to act? Unfortunately, the answer is not yet.

Right now, more than three-quarters of our exported goods go to the United States, with no other country making up more than five per cent of our exports. Selling south has always been the easier path, especially when our own internal trade barriers make moving goods within Canada more difficult than shipping them abroad. In fact, analysis by the National Bank suggests that these barriers create an artificial 21-per-cent “tariff” that we’ve imposed on ourselves. That’s a massive drag on our economy.

Recent trade disruptions driven by unpredictable American policies have underscored the need for change. But diversifying our markets and opening internal trade depend on something critical: world-class trade infrastructure. And that’s where we’re falling short.

This has not gone unnoticed internationally. Canada’s reputation as a reliable trading partner has taken a hit. According to the World Economic Forum, our ranking for infrastructure has been dropping for years. A 2021 European Court of Auditors report comparing Canada with Australia, the European Union, Switzerland, and the U.S., found that Canada alone lacked coherent, long-term infrastructure planning.

It hasn’t gone unnoticed at home, either. A 2023 Ipsos survey found that while 95 per cent of Canadians view trade infrastructure—like highways, ports, railroads and airports—as crucial to our economy, only nine per cent believe it’s in good shape.

So how do we fix it? The answer is simple: investment. Scaling up our trade infrastructure will not only address the immediate problem of getting our goods to markets; it will build supply-chain capacity, support green innovation and emerging



A 2023 Ipsos survey found that while 95 per cent of Canadians view trade infrastructure, like highways, ports, railroads and airports, as crucial to our economy, only nine per cent believe it’s in good shape, writes Rodrigue Gilbert. Photograph courtesy of Pixabay

technologies, create transformational jobs, and fuel our global competitiveness.

But not just any investment will do. We need smart, strategic, long-term planning that ensures the best return for Canada. That’s why the Canadian Construction Association has been working with stakeholders to push for a Canada Trade Infrastructure Plan (CTIP). This plan would establish a 20-plus year co-ordinated approach to investing in roads, rail, air, ports, and marine assets along key economic corridors. The goal? Improving reliability, boosting competitiveness, and restoring Canada’s global standing.

CTIP isn’t just another short-term spending spree—it’s a blueprint for sustainable growth. We need to focus on projects that are “shovel-worthy,” not just “shovel-ready.” And the momentum is there: Canada’s premiers have unanimously endorsed the principles of CTIP, recognizing the critical role of infrastructure in driving economic prosperity across all provinces and territories.

The business community is on board, national organizations support it, and Canadians overwhelmingly agree. That same Ipsos survey found that more than 90 per cent of Canadians in every province believe government and industry must work together on a long-term infrastructure plan.

It’s time to act. A well-planned, efficient national trade network will strengthen our economy, create jobs, support emerging industries, and secure our place in the global market. The foundation is set—let’s build on it and ensure Canada’s future remains strong.

Rodrigue Gilbert is the president of the Canadian Construction Association, the national voice for Canada’s construction industry, representing more than 18,000 member firms in an integrated structure of 57 local and provincial construction associations.

The Hill Times

Canada construction statistics

- In 2023, total construction industry employment exceeded 1.5 million people, which amounts to approximately one out of every 13 working Canadians. As a whole, the industry accounts for seven per cent of Canada’s GDP.
- Residential investment reached a peak in 2021 as interest rates reached a record low, and demand for housing was pronounced. Housing starts reached a record high of nearly 272,000 units that year. Investment dropped slightly in 2022, as the lifting of restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic helped to bolster immigration, and protected investment levels somewhat from the effects of rising interest rates later in the year. The sector reported a further contraction—of 10 per cent—in 2023 as rising interest rates curbed both new-housing construction and renovation activity.
- In 2022, employment in the residential and non-residential sectors was virtually identical, with both reaching levels of more than 590,000 workers. Residential construction employment contracted by four per cent in 2023, while non-residential employment rose by four per cent. These trends continue into 2024 before growth resumes in both sectors into the medium term.



- Non-residential construction investment levels have increased significantly since 2021, in part as a tool to stimulate the national economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in part in response to significant levels of population growth. Major projects have been deployed across the engineering construction and the construction of industrial, commercial, and institutional buildings in nearly every region of the country. Combined, these helped to increase non-residential investment levels by just under four per cent in 2023, following an eight per cent increase in 2022.

Source: Construction & Maintenance Industry: an assessment of construction labour markets from 2024 to 2033, released by BuildForce Canada in March, 2024.

INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing



The Port of Vancouver, pictured. To future-proof trade, we must reinforce ports with stronger defences, fortify bridges and rail lines to withstand extreme conditions, and expand cold-weather shipping in the Great Lakes and Atlantic, writes Hossein Bonakdari. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/Ted McGrath

Canada can solidify its position as a global trade leader by modernizing infrastructure

Canada's trade infrastructure, the backbone of its economy, is under mounting strain, but with smart, swift action, it can become a powerhouse of efficiency and resilience.

Hossein Bonakdari



Opinion

Water-related risks pose a growing threat to Canada's trade infrastructure, disrupting supply chains and imposing significant economic losses across key sectors. Industries such as manufacturing, energy, and agriculture, which rely heavily on

stable water supply and transport networks, are particularly vulnerable.

Between 2022 and 2050, manufacturing and distribution are projected to be the sectors most affected by water risks in Canada, with an estimated total GDP loss exceeding \$64-billion. Overall, water hazards are expected to result in a cumulative GDP loss of \$139-billion by 2050.

Floods, droughts, and infrastructure failures caused by water scarcity or excess precipitation not only disrupt production, but also delay transportation via ports, rail, and highways, compounding supply chain inefficiencies. These disruptions highlight the urgent need for strategic investments in climate-resilient trade infrastructure, including improved flood defences, advanced water management systems, and adaptive transportation networks. Without proactive measures, Canada risks severe economic setbacks, reduced trade competitiveness, and weakened supply chain reliability. Strengthening the resilience of ports, highways, and railways to withstand water-related disruptions will be

essential in safeguarding Canada's economic stability and ensuring the long-term sustainability of its trade infrastructure.

Urban centres, ports, railways, highways, and airports serve as essential trade corridors, supporting commerce, manufacturing, and supply chain networks. Meanwhile, rural and remote regions rely on transportation infrastructure to connect with domestic and international markets, facilitating economic growth and competitiveness. However, as trade volumes increase and supply chains become more complex, Canada's trade infrastructure faces mounting challenges, including aging transportation networks, climate change disruptions, bottlenecks at key ports, and shifting global trade dynamics.

Canada's trade infrastructure must keep pace with the demands of modern logistics and supply chain management. Increasing congestion at major ports, outdated rail and highway systems, and gaps in multimodal connectivity hinder efficiency and cost competitiveness. Climate change further compounds these

challenges, with extreme weather events, flooding, and wildfires threatening critical transportation networks. Additionally, supply chain vulnerabilities have been exposed by recent global disruptions, highlighting the need for resilient and adaptive infrastructure. Despite efforts to modernize and expand trade corridors, regulatory hurdles, funding constraints, and regional disparities continue to slow progress.

1. Aging Transportation Networks and Capacity Constraints:

Canada's trade infrastructure relies on an extensive network of roads, railways, ports, and airports, but much of this infrastructure is aging and struggling to accommodate increasing trade volumes. Major highways, such as the Trans-Canada Highway, experience congestion and maintenance backlogs, causing delays in freight transportation. Rail networks, operated by Canadian National Railway (CN) and Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC), are essential for moving bulk commodities, but track capacity limitations and scheduling inefficiencies slow shipments. Many of Canada's ports, including Vancouver, Montreal, and Halifax, are operating at near or full capacity, leading to delays and higher logistics costs. Without strategic upgrades and expansions, these constraints will continue to hinder trade efficiency.

2. Climate Change Impacts on Trade Infrastructure:

Extreme weather events increasingly threaten Canada's transportation networks, disrupting supply chains and causing costly delays. Coastal ports face rising sea levels and storm surges that endanger shipping operations. In the Prairies, extreme droughts and floods impact rail and trucking routes, disrupting grain and agricultural exports. Wildfires in British Columbia and Alberta have damaged key rail lines and highways, severing critical trade links for extended periods. Winter storms and ice build-up in the Great Lakes and Atlantic regions affect port operations and

inland shipping routes. Without investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, Canada's trade networks will remain vulnerable to climate-related disruptions.

3. Bottlenecks and Inefficiencies at Ports and Border Crossings:

Canada's major ports and border crossings are key gateways for trade, but growing congestion and regulatory inefficiencies hinder their effectiveness. The Port of Vancouver, Canada's largest port, has faced ongoing delays due to labour disputes, capacity limitations, and rail congestion. The Port of Montreal, a crucial hub for trade with Europe, faces similar issues, with container backlogs and infrastructure constraints slowing operations. Border crossings with the United States, such as the Windsor-Detroit corridor, experience lengthy wait times, adding costs and delays to cross-border trade. Outdated customs processing and insufficient automation further contribute to inefficiencies, impacting supply chain reliability.

4. Lack of Multimodal Connectivity and Regional Disparities:

A well-integrated multimodal transportation system is essential for efficient trade, but Canada still faces gaps in connectivity between rail, road, and maritime networks. Many inland logistics hubs lack sufficient rail access, increasing reliance on long-haul trucking, which is less efficient and environmentally sustainable. Remote and northern communities, including Indigenous regions, face significant transportation challenges, with limited infrastructure to support trade and economic development. The lack of efficient freight corridors between eastern and western Canada further complicates domestic supply chain integration.

Canada's trade infrastructure, the backbone of its economy, is under mounting strain, but with smart, swift action, it can become a powerhouse of efficiency and resilience. Climate change is taking a toll—rising seas and powerful storms are hammering coastal ports, while floods and wildfires are eroding roads and railways, disrupting supply chains.

To future-proof trade, we must reinforce ports with stronger defences, fortify bridges and rail lines to withstand extreme conditions, expand cold-weather shipping in the Great Lakes and Atlantic, and establish backup routes to maintain flow during disruptions. Streamlining digital customs processing, widening key trade corridors to the U.S., and optimizing rail-truck coordination will enhance efficiency, cutting delays and costs. By modernizing trade infrastructure with climate resilience and seamless connectivity in mind, Canada can solidify its position as a global trade leader, ensuring economic strength for decades to come.

Hossein Bonakdari, PhD, is an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of Ottawa. His research focuses on applying artificial intelligence and climate data to design sustainable and resilient infrastructure systems.

The Hill Times



Construction for Canadians

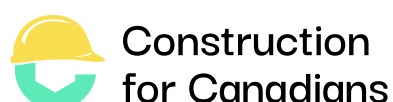
BUILT BY US, FOR YOU.

Construction is the backbone of Canada's growth. The industry shapes the communities we call home and builds the infrastructure that keeps our country moving forward.

To support Canada, the next federal government must support construction.

Get involved at [construction4cdns.ca](https://www.construction4cdns.ca)

Construction for Canadians is a joint effort of Canada's national, provincial, and regional construction associations.



INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing

Navigating uncertainty: telecom's essential role in securing Canada's future

As geopolitical and international trade tensions intensify, investing in robust and secure telecom infrastructure is not just a sector priority but a fundamental requirement for safeguarding Canada's future.

Robert Ghiz

Opinion



With a federal election now upon us, Canada stands at a critical juncture. Already grappling with rising costs and lagging productivity, our nation now faces the added challenge of escalating international trade tensions. These tensions are expected

to lead to higher consumer prices, slower economic growth, job losses, and an uncertain business environment that hinders investment.

Canadians are known for their resilience and resourcefulness. However, as we look to the future, it's not just the character of our people that will shape our nation, but also the policies set by our next federal government. These policies will be crucial in diversifying our economy and ensuring Canada's future prosperity, security, and self-reliance.

Telecommunications networks are the backbone of modern society, and play a crucial role in our economy, security, and sovereignty. In 2023, Canada's telecommunications sector added nearly \$81-billion in GDP to our economy, and supported almost 782,000 jobs across various industries. Enhanced connectivity, including the rollout of 5G networks, is projected to deliver an additional \$112-billion to Canada's GDP by 2035.

The sector has also delivered direct benefits to individual Canadians and families through a steady decline in consumer prices. According to Statistics Canada, over the past five years

ending in January 2025, the cost of cellular and internet services decreased by 46.3 per cent and six per cent, respectively. In contrast, the consumer price index for all goods in this country rose by 18 per cent, with significant price increases observed in gasoline (36.7 per cent), energy (29.4 per cent), food (21.8 per cent) and shelter (27.3 per cent).

During this period of declining prices, our telecom network operators have been making annual investments of more than \$12-billion in delivering expanded coverage, faster network speeds, and increased reliability. These investments also positively impact labour productivity. Access to high quality, affordable telecommunications services enables Canadian businesses and workers to leverage advanced digital tools and the latest innovations, thereby boosting productivity and competitiveness on a global scale. A continuously advancing digital economy is essential for improving productivity and enabling economic growth.

Investing in telecommunications networks is also crucial for protecting Canada's security and sovereignty. Secure and resilient



Telecommunications networks are the backbone of modern society, and play a crucial role in our economy, security, and sovereignty. In 2023, the telecommunications sector added nearly \$81-billion in GDP to the Canadian economy and supported almost 782,000 jobs across various industries, writes Robert Ghiz. Image courtesy of Pixabay

telecom infrastructure ensures that critical communications, including those of government agencies, emergency services, and the military, remain uninterrupted and protected from cyber threats. This is vital for national security, enabling a coordinated response to crises and safeguarding sensitive information.

However, the telecom sector's capacity to invest in network infrastructure is under significant pressure. Increasing and costly regulatory hurdles, high borrowing costs, declining prices, and increased network expenses are creating a challenging business environment. It is crucial for the new federal government to eliminate and avoid regulations that stifle innovation and investment. Prioritizing policies that enhance the telecommunications sector's

capacity to invest in expanding and strengthening network infrastructure is essential.

Telecom networks are indispensable to Canada's economic resilience, growth, security and sovereignty. As geopolitical and international trade tensions intensify, investing in robust and secure telecom infrastructure is not just a sector priority but a fundamental requirement for safeguarding Canada's future. With the right policies in place, Canada can navigate the complexities our country is facing and emerge stronger and more self-reliant.

Robert Ghiz is the president and CEO of the Canadian Telecommunications Association, and is a former premier of Prince Edward Island.

The Hill Times

Trade infrastructure: seize the moment, or lose the future

Canada's declining trade infrastructure is a problem years in the making — our national inventory has fallen in global rankings; investment has been uncoordinated and lacking.

Randall Zalazar

Opinion



Over the next few weeks, Canadians will hear a lot about problems and solutions from election contenders. While much

of the focus will rightfully be directed at our relationship with the United States, we must not forget about the countless other priority issues, like trade infrastructure, that can very easily fall off our collective radar.

The geopolitical context could not be clearer or more serious—Canada's economic security is at risk, and it is time to get our house in order. This truth has been widely recognized, and major parties agree not just on the problems, but on potential solutions.

Internal trade, for example, has been correctly identified as a barrier to economic growth in Canada. Though much work remains to be done, ambition is beginning to align with action. Our country's history can be characterized by north-south growth and east-west stagnation. What will help us break these patterns is devoting the same energy towards renewing and expanding national trade infrastructure, thereby improving the long-term health of our supply chains.

Canada's declining trade infrastructure is a problem years in the

making—our national inventory has fallen in global rankings; investment has been uncoordinated and lacking. Politicians almost unanimously agree on the need to build big and fast, but also to quickly meet roadblocks. Voters want big projects built, yet balk when those projects are in their backyards. Ambitious infrastructure can mean years of construction, noise, and environmental impact where Canadians live and work. There's little wonder that every project—be it an airport, port, railway or highway—is met with resistance. The list of cons always seems to be longer than the pros.

As this is going on, governments at all levels have not made it particularly easy on those who do propose nation-building projects. Election cycles constrain politicians to short-term, campaign-driven thinking. Slow and convoluted regulatory processes shield our leaders from accountability while subjecting projects to "death by a thousand cuts." A lack of mechanisms to resolve land-use conflicts means proponents need

to dedicate immense resources to simply understanding what the next steps might be, while project costs increase year over year. Due diligence and environmental and community protection are undeniably important — as is business certainty. Too often these priorities are out of balance, and as a result, the projects we need aren't built.

Moving forward will not be easy, but there are reasons to be hopeful. A swell of national pride and a subsequent willingness—if not eagerness—to do difficult things has created opportunity on a number of fronts. When Canadians are galvanized, we can do incredible things. In restoring our trade infrastructure, though, we need a lot more than just willingness. We need a plan—national and comprehensive—that prioritizes projects that are not simply ready, but worthy. We need a plan that will allow private sector participants to invest with certainty and without the need for a costly government intervention.

In the present absence of such a plan, there are three things the next federal government can do:

First, we hope to see a national supply-chain strategy released to help lay the foundation for a long-term Canada Trade Infrastructure Plan. The sooner effected stakeholders have an opportunity to review it, the more prepared they will be to engage with the next federal government.

Secondly, government must use every tool at its disposal to get stuck projects moving, be they ports, multi-modal terminals, highways or pipelines. The government needs to recognize the urgency of our current situation by doing whatever it can to expedite the projects that are already underway and derisk them.

Finally, investors need to know that the government will follow through on its commitments. That means delivering on promised investment tax credits, reviewing and eliminating outdated regulatory burdens, and understanding that every policy decision has consequences far beyond a press conference or a social media post.

We often hear that bad policy is better than uncertain policy, but Canadians deserve more than these two options. Otherwise, our supply chain decline will continue unabated.

Randall Zalazar is director of government relations at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. The Hill Times

Policy Briefing **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Challenges in building out the necessary infrastructure for transition to electric vehicles

The challenges in dealing with used electric vehicle battery packs and developing the infrastructure for their repurposing, recycling, and safe disposal include the lack of adequate governmental policies and incentives, shortage of investors and insufficiency of standards.

Mehrdad Kazerani



Opinion

We hear a lot that the future of transportation is electric, with promises of lower overall cost of ownership, sustainability, lower adverse environmental impact, better fuel economy, and enabling emerging technologies—such as autonomous navigation. The governments and automotive industry face numerous challenges in the transition to electric vehicles, especially passenger vehicles and city buses that seem to be the front-runners in getting electrified. The challenges include shortcomings of governmental policies, lack of adequate charging infrastructure, insufficiency of standards, inadequacy of protocols governing vehicle-grid transactions, and lack of enough experience with used electric vehicle batteries. This article aims to open a conversation on the infrastructure challenges.

One major challenge is related to the distribution systems serving residential neighbourhoods and commercial buildings. The visioned trend in adoption of electric vehicles, and the expected rise in charging power demand, point to exceeding the capacity of the installed distribution system infrastructure and causing exces-

sive stress on distribution system equipment (such as transformers). Local distribution companies must consider capacity expansion and installation of utility-owned solar PV and energy-storage systems in the residential neighbourhoods and around commercial buildings, as well as promoting residential rooftop PV systems with incentives for owners.

Another significant challenge will be satisfying the escalating charging power demand in highway corridors. A network of fast DC-charging stations along major highways is needed to alleviate range anxiety and reduce the time of recharging. These stations must be optimally sized and sited based on the use data and expected rate of growth, optimally designed for lowest cost and highest efficiency, supported by a strong grid tie to reduce impact of the concentrated charging load on the power system, and assisted by renewable energy generation and energy storage (in a solar carport style) to maximize availability and minimize environmental impact.

City buses, when electrified, will enjoy a boost in fuel econ-

omy, beyond what is experienced by passenger vehicles, due to frequent stop-and-go occurrences. Among available charging options (wired, pantograph and wireless), wireless has proved to be more advantageous. If right-of-way obstacles are eliminated, installation of wireless charging equipment is quick, and efficiencies of greater than 90 per cent, alignment tolerances of as high as four inches, and human safety are within reach. Dynamic wireless charging is preferred to static wireless charging (that is more appropriate for fleet charging) without the need to stop the vehicle. In dynamic wireless charging, the transmitter coils are laid over a few hundred meters in critical locations along dedicated lanes. The challenges with wireless charging of city buses include rather high initial costs, ownership issues, and inadequacy of standards. To make widespread wireless charging of city buses a reality, public transit companies and municipalities should include wireless charging in their short- and long-term plans and get the

required budget approvals. Also, the potential stakeholders must be educated about the benefits of the technology, and buying electric buses must be encouraged and facilitated. Furthermore, the safety issues must be addressed, and the missing standards must be established.

When the storage capacity and maximum available power of electric vehicle battery packs fall below specified levels (typically 80 per cent and 70 per cent, respectively), after eight to 10 years of service, they are no longer suitable for electric vehicle use and must be replaced. A sharp rise in the population of electric vehicles implies availability of many used battery packs down the road. Repurposing used electric vehicle battery packs and using them in stationary energy storage systems (such as those in fast DC charging stations) would delay their costly recycling and costly safe disposal. The challenges in dealing with used electric vehicle battery packs and developing the infrastructure for their repurposing, recycling, and safe disposal include the lack of adequate governmental policies and incentives, shortage of investors and insufficiency of standards.

Mehrdad Kazerani is a professor in the department of electrical and computer engineering, at the University of Waterloo. His main area of expertise is power electronics, and his research interests include microgrids/nanogrids, electrified vehicles (including electric planes), and hybrid energy systems.
The Hill Times

Building infrastructure to withstand the effects of climate change

Joseph Daraio



Opinion

How we build infrastructure in a changing climate depends on how much the climate will change and the potential impacts of that change, which depends on local conditions. Civil infrastructure (transportation, flood protection, buildings, etc.) is directly impacted and designed based on local climate conditions.

For instance, storm water management and flood control infrastructure are designed to contain and withstand rainfall events that may occur over their lifetime, and such extreme events are getting more frequent and intense with climate change. Infrastructure built to last for 20-50 years can no longer be designed based on historical climate data (extreme events that have happened in the past). Design and planning require global climate models that describe

potential frequency and intensity of future climate extremes.

The challenge is that we don't know for sure exactly how much the climate will change, but we have much knowledge and understanding of the range of potential impacts on infrastructure from both high and low emission scenarios.

Homeowners shore up sandbags around a property at Constance Bay on Apr. 30, 2019. Residents have battled record water levels along the Ottawa River Valley resulting in unprecedented flood damage.

This challenge can be met by building today for the potential worst case in the future, but this would be prohibitively expensive in most cases. Still, we must be prepared should the worst come. The engineering profession is adjusting to this new climate reality through changing standards from both within and outside the profession. Infrastructure Canada requires the inclusion of climate change using "The Climate Lens" for federally funded projects. Current approaches to climate adaptation in planning, design, and risk

assessment require new standards that are only slowly changing to address the new realities.

While the necessary technical knowledge and capacity with which to develop and meet new standards is increasing, we, as engineers, tend to stick to what we know has worked in the past (as perhaps most of us do). So, even as we include future climate projections in our designs, since the future will no longer be like the past, we don't really know how climate change impacts on social systems or economics may come into play.

Most of us may forget, or not realize, just how much our infrastructure systems create the structure of our built environment, determine our day-to-day movements, support our values, and contribute to our quality of life. The need to build capacity to adapt infrastructure to local changes in climate is not just a problem for engineers. The saying "think globally, act locally" originated in the 1970's in an environmental context and represents an approach that directly applies to climate change adaptation.

Global climate change will have local impacts that go beyond just infrastructure design, and these impacts will be dependent upon geographical regions and, more precisely, the hazards to which a place is exposed. For instance, many coastal communities in Newfoundland and Labrador will be impacted by the combination of increasing sea level and higher intensity extra-tropical storms, as occurred in Port aux Basques in September 2022 (Fiona), while northern Labrador faces melting permafrost and reductions in land-fast ice that has been used for generations as part of their winter transportation infrastructure. Building climate resilient infrastructure requires, in addition to the technical expertise provided by engineers, a consideration of local knowledge from community members and consideration of community values. Multidisciplinary teams of engineers, biologists, and social scientists must be engaged in planning and design of infrastructure in a changing climate, and must include local leaders, knowl-

edge holders, artists, and other stakeholders to develop solutions that support and enhance the values of the community.

There is not a one-size-fits-all technical answer to how we should build climate resilient infrastructure, but a process open to all that aims for effective, flexible, and equitable solutions can enhance and encourage community engagement. Community involvement, particularly in the early stages of infrastructure development, allows those of us living within and using infrastructure to understand what it does, how it works, and how to respond if/when it fails.

We all have a part to play to effectively withstand and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Our changing climate creates the need to rethink infrastructure and presents an opportunity to do things better by integrating place-based knowledge and values with broad-based technical know-how that allows for flexibility in the application of multi-disciplinary solutions.

Joseph Daraio is a professional engineering and an associate professor in the department of civil engineering at Memorial University. His research focuses on understanding the impacts of climate change on storm water drainage and flooding and planning and design of civil infrastructure with climate change uncertainty.
The Hill Times

Election to likely hinge on 50 most competitive ridings, but things could shift greatly by polling day, say politicians

This election's ballot question is twofold: is it time for change, and who is best suited to stand up to Donald Trump, says pollster Greg Lyle.

Continued from page 1

as recently as early January, the Liberals were trailing the Conservatives by about 25 points, yet they now lead by 13—a dramatic turnaround of 38 points. With another four weeks of campaigning still ahead, further swings in either direction are possible.

Washburn said that, based on political trends back in December, he would have predicted most close races leaning toward the Conservatives. However, current trends suggest those contests are now more likely to favour the Lib-

erals. In this scenario, the NDP appears most vulnerable, with a real risk of losing their closely contested ridings to the Liberals.

According to a three-day rolling poll released by EKOS Research on March 26, if a federal election were held today, the Liberal Party would secure 48.3 per cent of the vote, followed by the Conservatives with 35.5 per cent and the New Democrats with 7.4 per cent.

Unlike the 2021 election, which had 338 seats up for grabs,

the next election will see 343 ridings in play nationally—a net increase of five due to the recent redistribution of electoral boundaries. A recent Elections Canada transposition analysis of the 2021 results, adjusted for the new boundaries, suggests that the Liberals would have won fewer seats and the Conservatives more if those changes had been in effect at the time.

Under the updated boundaries, the Liberal Party would have won 157 seats, compared to the 160 it

actually carried in 2021—including that of Spadina—Fort York, Ont., where Kevin Vuong ran as a Liberal but was disendorsed two days before election day. The Conservatives would have increased their count to 126, up from 119. The Bloc Québécois would have gained two additional seats for a total of 34, while the NDP would have lost one, bringing them down to 24. The Green Party's representation would have remained unchanged at two seats.

Of all 343 ridings, 50 would have been considered highly competitive, with winning margins between 0.1 and 5.1 percentage points. In those close contests, the Liberals would have taken 25, the Bloc nine, the Conservatives 11, and the NDP five.

Commenting on the significance of tight races, Greg Lyle, president of Innovative Research,

Continued on page 23

The 50 Most Vulnerable Ridings in 2025 Election, Based on 2021 Election

Riding	Province/Territory	Winning Party	Vote %	Runner-up Party	Winning Margin
Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	36.59%	Liberal Party of Canada	0.08
Trois-Rivières	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	29.49%	Conservative Party of Canada	0.14
Brome—Missisquoi	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	34.96%	Bloc Québécois	0.32
Niagara South	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	33.41%	Liberal Party of Canada	0.45
Milton East—Halton Hills South	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	41.71%	Conservative Party of Canada	0.46
Beauport—Limoilou	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	31.06%	Conservative Party of Canada	0.52
Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	30.88%	New Democratic Party	0.58
Kitchener—Conestoga	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	38.29%	Conservative Party of Canada	0.65
Central Newfoundland	Newfoundland and Labrador	Conservative Party of Canada	46.89%	Liberal Party of Canada	0.88
Winnipeg West	Manitoba	Conservative Party of Canada	40.35%	Liberal Party of Canada	1.10
Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay	British Columbia	New Democratic Party	38.97%	Conservative Party of Canada	1.39
Edmonton Centre	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	32.60%	Liberal Party of Canada	1.39
Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	31.98%	New Democratic Party	1.65
Kitchener South—Hespeler	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	37.45%	Conservative Party of Canada	1.91
Halifax	Nova Scotia	Liberal Party of Canada	42.24%	New Democratic Party	1.95
King—Vaughan	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	44.86%	Liberal Party of Canada	1.96
Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	37.42%	Liberal Party of Canada	2.23
Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	44.76%	Conservative Party of Canada	2.64
London West	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	36.87%	Conservative Party of Canada	2.72
Nanaimo—Ladysmith	British Columbia	New Democratic Party	29.38%	Conservative Party of Canada	2.79
Montmorency—Charlevoix	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	36.70%	Conservative Party of Canada	2.82
Longueuil—Saint-Hubert	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	41.20%	Liberal Party of Canada	2.88
Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	34.50%	New Democratic Party	2.94
Cloverdale—Langley City	British Columbia	Liberal Party of Canada	39.10%	Conservative Party of Canada	2.98
Port Moody—Coquitlam	British Columbia	New Democratic Party	35.04%	Conservative Party of Canada	3.08

Source: Elections Canada

Riding	Province/Territory	Winning Party	Vote %	Runner-up Party	Winning Margin
Richmond Centre—Marpole	British Columbia	Liberal Party of Canada	38.58%	Conservative Party of Canada	3.12
Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	35.59%	Liberal Party of Canada	3.23
North Island—Powell River	British Columbia	New Democratic Party	39.46%	Conservative Party of Canada	3.24
Berthier—Maskinongé	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	35.93%	New Democratic Party	3.25
Fredericton—Oromocto	New Brunswick	Liberal Party of Canada	37.79%	Conservative Party of Canada	3.28
South Surrey—White Rock	British Columbia	Conservative Party of Canada	42.44%	Liberal Party of Canada	3.54
Bay of Quinte	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	40.59%	Liberal Party of Canada	3.57
Edmonton Southeast	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	37.70%	Liberal Party of Canada	3.70
West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	Liberal Party of Canada	33.05%	Conservative Party of Canada	3.91
Davenport	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	43.60%	New Democratic Party	4.03
Edmonton Griesbach	Alberta	New Democratic Party	40.36%	Conservative Party of Canada	4.05
Cambridge	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	38.24%	Conservative Party of Canada	4.10
Vancouver Granville	British Columbia	Liberal Party of Canada	37.23%	New Democratic Party	4.31
Peterborough	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	39.19%	Liberal Party of Canada	4.37
Spadina—Harbourfront	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	38.23%	New Democratic Party	4.39
Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	42.79%	New Democratic Party	4.40
Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	44.34%	Liberal Party of Canada	4.58
Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	34.26%	Conservative Party of Canada	4.98
Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	36.86%	Conservative Party of Canada	4.98
Long Range Mountains	Newfoundland and Labrador	Liberal Party of Canada	44.39%	Conservative Party of Canada	5.03
Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	40.44%	Bloc Québécois	5.16
Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	40.54%	Liberal Party of Canada	5.18
St. Catharines	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	37.87%	Conservative Party of Canada	5.50
Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	43.78%	Conservative Party of Canada	5.62
Thérèse-De Blainville	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	40.94%	Liberal Party of Canada	5.74
Thérèse-De Blainville	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	40.94%	Liberal Party of Canada	5.74

Continued from page 22

told *The Hill Times* that while closely contested ridings are always pivotal in determining election outcomes, the list of battleground ridings could shift significantly as election day approaches. He likened traditional elections to “trench warfare,” where parties battle for minor gains in public opinion. However, given the “huge swings in public opinion” currently underway, he suggested that this election may be characterized by far more dramatic shifts in voter sentiment.

“This is not a sort of in-the-trenches battle,” he said. “It’s a war movement, it’s like tank battles in the desert. Things move dramatically and seats move into play, move out of play almost weekly at this point.”

Lyle explained that just a few weeks ago, the federal Liberals were struggling, merely hoping to retain their footing, while the Conservatives appeared poised for a thumping majority, with projections suggesting they could win nearly 200 seats. Now, however, the tables have turned, and the Liberals find themselves in majority territory—largely due to the ongoing trade conflict with the United States.

He added that if the proposed tariffs do take effect on April 2, the Liberals’ lead could widen even further. Still, much depends on public reaction, especially if the tariffs remain in place until April 28. A potential risk for the Liberals, however, is if U.S. President Donald Trump chooses to keep the tariffs in effect all the way through to election day—something that could ultimately erode Liberal support.

“When you’ve lost your job, when you can see people around you losing their jobs, and you see the prices on the shelves going up, and there’s no end in sight,” said Lyle. “What do you do then? And that’s the wild card in the election. That is the big risk, the big roll of the dice that the Liberals have taken.”

Lyle said that at the outset of the election campaign, Prime Minister Mark Carney was a relatively unknown figure to many Canadians. Since then, the Conservatives have made efforts to shape public perception of the former Bank of Canada and Bank of England governor in a negative light. One of the inherent risks with lesser-known political figures is that when voters are introduced to a stream of negative information in rapid succession, they are more likely to form an unfavourable impression of that individual.

“One of the metaphors people use for attitudes is the metaphor of a ball of yarn that you add strings, you add strings, it grows and it grows and it grows,” said Lyle. “The more impressions we have of someone, the less impact the next impression is going to have because we have the weight of all the past impressions. Most people only have a couple impressions of Carney. They’re good so far, but it’s what we call lightly held. And so if they learn three bad things in a row about Mark Carney, his numbers could tank.”



Volatile electorate: Liberal Leader Mark Carney, left, Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre. With the ongoing, wild swings in public opinion, the list of vulnerable ridings for the four federal parties could change significantly by election time, say pollsters Greg Lyle and Earl Washburn. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and illustration by Naomi Wildeboer



If United States President Donald Trump’s tariffs remain in place until April 28, it’s unclear how Canadians will respond—whether they’ll prefer a leader who pushes back, or one who seeks to restore peace with the U.S., says pollster Greg Lyle. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Conservative political insider Kory Teneycke, right, pictured with then-Liberal cabinet minister Marc Miller, is warning the federal Conservatives to pivot immediately to the trade war with the U.S., or risk losing the election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson

Lyle said that the ballot question in this election is twofold: Is it time for a change in government, and who is best positioned to stand up to Trump? He said that if the tariffs remain in effect until April 28, it could trigger significant economic disruption in Ontario, with ripple effects across the country. Should that scenario unfold, the focus of the ballot question could evolve—from who can confront Trump effectively to who is best equipped to restore stable trade relations with the U.S. president.

“How Canadians feel today is much more betrayal than fear,” said Lyle. “Three weeks after the tariffs go in, my bet is that the fear goes up, and so at that point people may say, ‘well, actually, having a guy that sounds like Trump, he might do better at trying to get us out of this mess than the guy who’s been sort of shaking his fist at Trump and look at the mess that we’re in.’”

Meanwhile, Kory Teneycke, a veteran Conservative insider who has won three back-to-back elections for Ontario Premier Doug

Ford, said that U.S. tariffs have become the top-of-mind issue for Canadians, yet the federal Conservatives have not given it the attention it deserves. In contrast, the Carney Liberals are directly addressing the issue. If the Conservatives fail to shift their focus, they risk a significant defeat in the election.

“It’s like everyone in Canada has gotten together and said, ‘Where are we going to go for dinner tonight?’ And everyone agreed, ‘Let’s go for Italian,’ and what Pierre is offering is

a trip to the Mandarin buffet,” said Teneycke in a speech at the Empire Club in Toronto last week, according to *The Toronto Star*. “His pitch is, well, there’s some sad pizza over in the corner, and we’ve got spaghetti and meatballs, also a little sad, but we’ve got sushi and we’ve got General Tso’s chicken and we’ve got chicken fingers and fries and soft serve ice cream,” he said. “And everyone’s like, ‘But I want fucking Italian.’”

arana@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Public servants affected by the Phoenix Payroll System gather outside Treasury Board offices to call for the government to fix the payroll issues plaguing the public service on Feb. 28, 2018. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

an honest man. He simply wanted to get the monies due to him so that he could meet his financial obligations and live the rest of his retired life in peace. Of note, Barry found the stress caused by the pay issues debilitating and was hospitalized.

We were able to trace these corrected amounts to Barry's bank statements, and he was prepared to pay these amounts. However, the story does not end here. The Pay Centre insisted that Barry must repay the full amount, including the tax amount that the Pay Centre had paid to the CRA.

I also found that the amount paid to him on Jan. 11, 2017, had been outside the six-year statutory limitation, according to Crown Liability and Proceedings Act, which requires that the federal government should not recover amounts that it has not taken steps to recover within six years. We filed a grievance.

The Pay Centre played hardball. Barry was readmitted to the hospital. He was very vulnerable. He did not have any energy left to fight for his rights. We agreed with the Pay Centre to deduct the full, gross amounts of the overpayments, and release his balance. It took a few weeks for the Pay Centre to release his net amount of \$67,824.95 minus taxes that they remitted to CRA. I tried to make the case that the Pay Centre remit the net amount of tax, since they had already paid CRA tax on the amount of money which they had already recovered from Barry. To no avail.

Barry, Ellen, and I had agreed to celebrate over coffee once Barry was discharged from hospital. My role had essentially ended. Next time I met Ellen in the office corridor, I reminded her about our coffee appointment with Barry to celebrate receiving his own money after a long struggle. Barry had passed away, she told me. We hugged.

I have a few suggestions to reduce the hardship of public servants while the employer is learning lessons from its Phoenix experience in its 10th year:

- When the Pay Centre has deducted taxes on wrongfully calculated amounts, it should apologize to the employee for the mistake, and only recover the net amount that was paid. It should recover from the CRA the tax it has erroneously paid to the agency, and not put the burden on the shoulders of employees;

- It should voluntarily write off overpayment if the employer has not taken recovery action within six years since the overpayment occurred, in accordance with the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act.

- It should not hold up pension and severance pay from retiring employees, based on pay issues created by Phoenix;

- It should not discriminate against retired employees, and recover any outstanding amounts after corrections have been made; and it should

- Write a letter of apology signed by the deputy minister to every employee who has suffered pay issues, once the issues have been resolved and file closed.

Waheed Khan is president of the Community of Federal Visible Minorities.

The Hill Times

Phoenix pay system: the real story of a public servant

When the Pay Centre has deducted taxes on wrongfully calculated amounts, it should apologize to the employee for the mistake and only recover the net amount that was paid. It should recover from the Canada Revenue Agency the tax it has erroneously paid to the agency, and not put the burden on the shoulders of employees.

Waheed Khan

Opinion



Another anniversary has come and gone. Feb. 24 reminded me of that fateful day in 2016 when the first wave of

the Phoenix pay system was launched to serve 34 government departments, affecting 120,000 employees. Employees reported problems with their pay, and their unions advised the federal government to delay the full implementation of the Phoenix pay system, but the government ignored the advice and rolled out Phoenix to the remaining 67 departments on April 21, 2016.

It was clear that the new system was unable to do the job, but senior officials were in denial and bulldozed through, claiming to overcome "teething problems." Years passed and the problems grew, along with costs. On July 31, 2018, in their report, "The Phoenix Pay Problem: Working Toward a Solution," the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, called Phoenix a failure and an "international embarrassment." Instead of saving \$70-million a year as planned, the report said that the cost to taxpayers to fix Phoenix's problems could reach \$2.2-billion by 2023.

The Office of the Auditor General published a report in 2018, Report 1—Phoenix Pay Problems, that concluded that the Phoenix project "was an incomprehensible failure of project management and oversight." The report noted that a year-and-a-half after the Phoenix pay system was launched, the number of public servants in departments and agencies using the Miramichi Pay Centre with outstanding

pay requests quadrupled to more than 150,000.

"However, it took Public Services and Procurement Canada four months to recognize that there were serious pay problems, and it took the department about a year after that to have a better understanding of the problems," the report stated. "The problem grew to the point that as of 30 June 2017, unresolved errors in pay totalled over half a billion dollars."

While statistics are astounding, the stories of individual public servants who suffered the consequences are less known. Let me share one real story of a public servant who sought my help.

Ellen, a mail room worker, asked me in the corridor one day if, as a union representative, I could help her with a workplace issue. I agreed, and we met subsequently. She explained to me that her partner, Barry, had retired two years ago, but had not received his severance pay, despite many follow-ups with the Pay Centre, Pension Centre, and his department.

After a careful review of his dossier of documents, I came to the conclusion that while the Pay Centre's correspondence was all about overpayments, it was Barry who was owed a significant amount of money. We discovered that the actual amounts of overpayments were less than the employer claimed because the employer was also counting the tax it had deducted and paid

to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). I proposed that the Pay Centre release to Barry his severance while withholding any amount of overpayments, and, in the meantime, the Pay Centre should provide him proof of such overpayments.

The Pay Centre did not agree. They insisted that Barry must first pay the full amount owed to the employer, and only then would they release Barry's amount due.

In the meantime, I reviewed all documents and contacted the Pay Centre on his behalf, and presented my findings, as follows:

- Barry was entitled to \$45,715.62 of severance pay, payable upon retirement.

- He was entitled to receive \$35,858.19 (equal to his unused vacation of 763 hours), payable upon retirement.

- PSPC had informed him that it had overpaid \$10,635.47, although Barry had received only \$9,457.36 through two cheques (Jan. 11, 2017, \$3,913.39 and on Nov. 27, 2019, \$5,543.97). This is why Barry could not trace the amounts in his bank statements.

- The employer had not recovered \$3,113.39 transition payment when the employer changed salary payment from current to arrears basis on May 21, 2014.

Barry was owed a net amount of \$67,824.95 (\$81,573.81-\$13,748.86). Like the vast majority of public servants, Barry was



A CBC Radio Canada International poster from 1956. Restoring and reimagining RCI is not only possible, it's necessary, and would have an incredible impact globally, with minimal cost. In the past, before the serious budget cuts of the 1990s, RCI with a budget only a fraction of that of the BBC World Service, writes Wojtek Gwiazda. Image courtesy of Gary Stevens/Wikimedia Commons

Time to restore Radio Canada International or Canada's world service

Canada, Canadians, and our federal government have to step up and restore RCI because it comes down to whether we are enough of a nation to have a world service.

Wojtek Gwiazda



Opinion

If ever there was a time for Canada to restore Radio Canada International, it certainly is now. With Canada's sovereignty under attack by American President Donald Trump and his administration, we need to get out the story of how Canadians are not caving in, but collectively resisting, and rediscovering their identity as Canadians.

For the most part, and for most of our history, we have failed to promote ourselves effectively, not in a boastful way, but recognizing the incredible talents we have—whether it is inventions, culture, social conscience, even politeness. But recent days have shown that there is a limit to our politeness, and a growing desire to assert ourselves, and to protect what we've achieved in this country.

Since its inception 80 years ago, Radio Canada International's (RCI) sole purpose has been to tell the world about our nation in a way that is understandable for people outside Canada who know little or nothing about our country.

For those of us who worked for RCI, we know there is tremendous interest in Canada. We are a multicultural society dealing with all kinds of issues, and we are next door to a superpower that can radically affect our reality. How we have dealt with that in the past, and how we will be dealing with this reality can and will resonate with people in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas.

No one else can tell our story better than us. And if we are to strengthen our connections with

countries other than the United States, there's no faster, cheaper, or more dependable means than an effective international service producing news and views adapted to different international audiences.

Imagine what it would mean to Ukrainians to still hear newscasts and information from Canada about how our government is supporting Ukraine, or how the Ukrainian community is reacting in Canada. Imagine what it would mean to Russians to hear from our Russian service about Canadian and world views about the war in Ukraine, and Russia, in general. It's not happening because both of those services were victims of CBC budget cuts.

The silencing of the Voice of America and other U.S. international broadcast outlets has shocked many, and underlined the importance of having an independent Canadian service not only because it gives information about Canada, but also provides independent information for regions of the world that do not have access to uncensored news.

For those who specialize in foreign affairs, this is nothing new. Having an international

voice just makes sense for political, economic, and even cultural reasons.

Recently, former Canadian ambassador Roman Washuk posted on X: "#Canada already has a bilingual public broadcaster with multichannel multimedia offerings. With the nuking of #US international broadcasting, there's a niche that a multilingual Radio Canada International drawing on our existing platforms could fill for a world in info turmoil."

Also recently, former diplomat and ex-Conservative cabinet minister Chris Alexander tweeted: "With opposition support, the federal government should relaunch Radio Canada International on a larger scale, prioritizing news in English, French, Russian, Mandarin, Ukrainian, Georgian, Belarusian, Romanian, Hungarian, Punjabi, Urdu, Pashto, Dari, Farsi, Amharic & Arabic."

Even before the present crisis, in March of 2021, 45 former Canadian ambassadors wrote to the Liberal government calling on it "to convene an independent assessment of how Radio Canada International can best continue its international mission, rebuild its

capacity to fulfil its core mandate, and do so with a form of financial and editorial autonomy."

Restoring and reimagining RCI is not only possible, it's also necessary, and would have an incredible impact globally, with minimal cost. In the past, before the serious budget cuts of the 1990s, RCI—with a budget only a fraction of that of the BBC World Service—was close behind the BBC in popularity.

For this restoration to work, two things are necessary. First, RCI cannot become a propaganda tool. It must continue to adhere to strict journalistic rules, which are even more stringent than that of the CBC. And second, RCI's editorial independence from the government and the CBC has to be effectively protected in law in the Broadcasting Act.

The encouraging aspect of hoping for a reimagined RCI is that throughout its existence, RCI has been supported by the Liberals, Conservatives, the NDP, Bloc Québécois, and Greens. The problem has always been that, once in government, parties have then not followed through in supporting RCI financially, and have left that to the CBC, which left RCI vulnerable to devastating cuts in budgets and resources.

Canada, Canadians, and our federal government have to step up and restore RCI because it comes down to whether we are enough of a nation to have a world service.

Wojtek Gwiazda is the spokesperson of the RCI Action Committee. For 35 years, he was a host-producer with the English section of Radio Canada International, and retired from the service in 2015. He is based in Montreal.

The Hill Times



Ontario Premier Doug Ford, pictured Jan. 15, 2025, at the first ministers' meeting Ottawa, has caught the attention of *The Atlantic* magazine, which recently profiled him in a piece entitled, 'The crimson face of Canadian Anger,' writes Paul Deegan. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Doug Ford: the most successful retail politician in Canada today

As Canadians head to the polls, federal party leaders should examine Doug Ford's enviable electoral success and borrow a page from his ability to communicate clearly, confidently, and cheerfully.

Paul Deegan



Opinion

Five years ago, I wrote in *The Toronto Star* that Ontario Premier Doug Ford had found his groove in the COVID crisis, citing several attributes: discipline, empathy, calm, clarity, and good nature.

Since then, Ford has racked up two more majority governments during a time when incumbents are increasingly becoming an endangered species. More importantly, when now-former prime minister Justin Trudeau's government was adrift, teetering, and facing a trade war and bullying threats to our national sovereignty from U.S. President Donald Trump, Ford has once again stepped up and met the moment.

As the leader of Canada's most populous province, which is home to Canada's trade-dependent auto sector, and as chair of the Council of the Federation, he had a natural platform to lead,

and he seized the opportunity with gusto.

He rallied his provincial counterparts during a time when it was clear that prime minister Trudeau's days were numbered. Ford bombarded U.S. cable networks with feel-good advertisements about the importance of the relationship between Ontario (and by inference Canada) with the United States. He even went so far as to sponsor *Hannity*, the primetime program on Fox News loved by Trump's MAGA base.

While Trudeau was interviewed by Jake Tapper on CNN, Ford's network of choice was Fox News. Armed with irrefutable facts about the two-way trading relationship, his passion and Canadian pride came through in spades, which made him a highly effective advocate for "Fortress Am-Can"—his name for a North American trading bloc—and an

overnight cable news darling. Folksy and formidable, Ford in his now trademark 'Canada is Not for Sale' ballcap has become the face of Canada to many Americans.

Ford pulled American booze from LCBO shelves, cancelled a \$100-million contract with 'First Buddy' Elon Musk's Starlink, and in a bold gambit slapped a 25-per-cent surcharge on electricity exports to the U.S., which was backed up by a threat to cut it off completely "with a smile on my face" if Trump countered. Ford's gamble got the U.S. administration's attention, and he scored a meeting with U.S. Commerce secretary Howard Lutnick, which Ford characterized as "productive."

Ford has caught the attention of *The Atlantic*, the leading American literary magazine, which recently profiled him in a piece entitled, 'The Crimson face of Canadian Anger.' They

referred to him as "an old-school retail politician with more than 16 million constituents ... the

barrel-shaped leader of a near-trillion-dollar economy."

Ontario has always played a leadership role in our federation. Ford has met the moment just as David Peterson and Bill Davis did during constitutional talks in 1981. As Canadians head to the polls, federal party leaders should examine Ford's enviable electoral success and borrow a page from his ability to communicate clearly, confidently, and cheerfully. Arguably, Ontario's pragmatic patriotic pugilist populist premier is the most successful retail politician in Canada today.

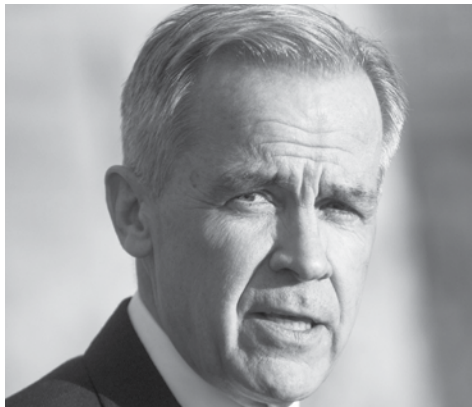
Paul Deegan is CEO of Deegan Public Strategies and was deputy

executive director of the National Economic Council in the Clinton White House.

The Hill Times

“Ford has caught the attention of *The Atlantic*, the leading American literary magazine, which recently profiled him in a piece entitled, 'The Crimson face of Canadian Anger.' They referred to him as 'an old-school retail politician with more than 16 million constituents ... the barrel-shaped leader of a near-trillion-dollar economy.'”

Will Canada emerge stronger and more united? Here's hoping



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, lower left, and Green Party co-leaders Elizabeth May and Jonathan Pedneault. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia

Three issues will be bundled into one overarching challenge that will dominate this election's discourse: how leaders propose to deal with the White House, how they'll protect our independence, and how they plan to grow Canadian prosperity.

Sergio Marchi

Opinion



Canadian politics has often been characterized as boring. And while a bland and understated approach has worked out favourably for us in the past, the last two months have been anything but dull.

It started with then-prime minister Justin Trudeau finally calling it a day on Jan. 6. As recounted in an earlier piece I wrote for *Open Canada*, a deep malaise and fatigue had set in. Plus, any government approaching 10 years in office is usually skating on thin ice as the public becomes itchy for change. But Trudeau waited much too long, and should have taken his walk in the snow over a year ago. As a result, he and his party had consistently fallen 20 points behind then-Opposition Leader Pierre Poilievre. Trudeau had also lost the confidence of his caucus. At the end, he was isolated and alone.

Moreover, he left his successor, Mark Carney, very little runway to prepare for a new government, develop new policies, and to be better known by the Canadian public. This was a grave disservice, and a critical failure on Trudeau's part. All leaders have an obligation to leave their successors with a strong party, and ample room to govern.

Notwithstanding, Carney has done remarkably well with the cards he's been dealt. I have never met the man, but to date, I have been impressed. He won the Liberal Party leadership race with 86 per cent of the vote, which is an overwhelming victory, and a huge benefit for him going into a

federal election. He has a united, reinvigorated, and motivated party behind him.

He also has been sure-footed and confident in his public appearances since being sworn in as prime minister, which is quite notable since politics is a new vocation for him. For starters, Carney chose a much smaller and focused cabinet, which has met with public favour. He also has shown a strategic bent in pursuing key meetings in quick order—including with his cabinet and caucus; our Canadian ambassador to the United States Kirsten Hillman; Ontario Premier Doug Ford and Quebec Premier François Legault; Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeagok, with whom he made a key announcement regarding the protection of our sovereignty in the Arctic; with steel workers in Hamilton, Ont., as a backdrop to U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum; Canadian security and defence officials; and travelled to Europe to meet French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, and King Charles, which served to strengthen old friendships. Not bad for his first five days in office! And he met with all the premiers on March 21 in Ottawa.

With Trudeau gone and Carney successfully establishing himself, public opinion polls have narrowed substantially. The Liber-

als and Conservatives are now virtually tied, with some studies suggesting that the former is beginning to pull in front of its rivals. The Liberals have created new momentum, while many Conservative MPs and insiders are in panic mode.

Often, whom we select to lead us is influenced by the times in which we live. When it came to the recent Liberal Party leadership campaign, Carney's economic credentials loomed large during this moment of economic turmoil and uncertainty. And today, most Canadians are showing confidence in his economic experience and leadership.

But politics can change on a dime. After being favoured for such a long time, the Conservatives can bounce back during the election writ. Plus, Poilievre has been in politics all his life, is an effective communicator, and is very quick on his feet. Liberals would be foolish to underestimate him.

This election, scheduled for April 28, will largely be about one issue: U.S. President Donald Trump. That's the other reason why the two leading political parties are deadlocked. For Liberals, Trump has been the "political miracle" they've prayed for. The bad news is that he has

been terrorizing Canada for two months now.

In just 60 days, thanks to Trump's misguided adventures, the world order has been turned upside down. He has gone after friends with a vengeance—especially Canada—has undermined alliances and institutions, upended long-held values and traditions, and launched a trade war on multiple fronts. No one could have predicted that Trump 2.0 would be this unhinged.

Canadians, as a result, are most anxious about the impact of U.S. tariffs, and the president's constant musings about our nation becoming the 51st state. Our economy and way of life are under threat. Nothing has come close to this moment in our history, not since the Second World War.

Therefore, three issues will be bundled into one overarching challenge that will dominate this election's discourse: how leaders propose to deal with the White House, how they'll protect our independence, and how they plan to grow Canadian prosperity.

As such, it will be much like the 1988 election when the proposed Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. overshadowed all other issues. As a candidate in that race, I remember it well. It was essentially a referendum on whether or not to sign a trade accord with America. It was unfair to so many other important domestic matters that deserved some airtime. But that's what happens when the public mind is rattled by a single public policy.

Matters concerning foreign affairs normally go missing in action during federal elections. In this one, such concerns will be centre stage. International politics, with Trump as the leading man, are becoming very local. This election will effectively be a plebiscite on who can best deal with Trump, and who can lead Canada through these precarious days. That means the campaign will be even more focused on the party leaders, with next month's televised debates becoming high-wire acts that will likely have a crucial impact on the final outcome on April 28. Unfortunately, individual candidates will be an afterthought.

On the upside, is it overly naive to expect that the political partisanship will be less nasty, given the dire consequences facing Canada? That leaders—on some issues and proposals—will actually agree with each other, or that the television debates will be more than 30-second muck-racking exercises? That our country will emerge stronger and more united?

Here's hoping.

I also hope that voter turnout will be at a record high, that Canadians truly make their voices heard, loud and clear, on the future of our nation.

Yes, we are now living in politically interesting times. For many, too interesting.

Sergio Marchi has served as a city councillor, Liberal MP, Jean-Chrétien-era cabinet minister, and ambassador. This piece was first published in Open Canada.

The Hill Times

Canadians can no longer afford to be complacent



Prime Minister Mark Carney, Internal Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland and Quebec Premier François Legault arrive at the first ministers' meeting on March 21, 2025. A comprehensive Team Canada approach is key to address the evolving challenges to our sovereignty, write CSG Senators Rebecca Patterson, Krista Ann Ross, Mary Robinson, and Gigi Osler. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Though Canada has long maintained mutually beneficial relationships with many of our allies, the current geopolitical reality shows a turbulent road ahead with threats to our economic security and well-being. When one of every six jobs in the country is supported by Canadian exports, a foreign state that weaponizes trade is a direct threat to Canadian jobs and livelihoods.

Senators Rebecca Patterson, Krista Ann Ross, Mary Robinson & Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler



Opinion

Elbows up, Canada. Repeated U.S. threats to annex our country through economic force have boosted Canadians' national pride. The collective effervescence of renewed patriotism should be harnessed to reinforce national identity, sovereignty, and security. This op-ed launches a series where Senators explore national security through a broad lens, examining agriculture, business, and health care as Canada's pillars of resilience against emerging global threats and new challenges.

This country's greatest responsibility is ensuring the sovereignty and security of its people. The shifting realities of global politics makes it obvious that Canada can no longer rely on others for our military security amid escalating threats, particularly in the Arctic. We must step up.

Asserting our sovereignty and ensuring security in the Arctic is not just about having a military presence, it is also about economic investment, development, and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Those of us in Canada's south can overlook our land borders in the North; for example, that Yukon shares a border with Alaska. Therefore, security in the Arctic is not just a role for the military, it but also for CBSA and the RCMP.

Canadians can no longer afford to be complacent. Our sovereignty and security must be a concern to us all, and the issue needs to be front and centre in the federal election.

Our national security is also dependent on a healthy and productive economy.

“
A
COMPREHENSIVE
TEAM CANADA
APPROACH
IS ESSENTIAL
TO ADDRESS
THE EVOLVING
CHALLENGES
TO OUR
SOVEREIGNTY.”

Though Canada has long maintained mutually beneficial relationships with many of our allies, the current geopolitical reality shows a turbulent road ahead with threats to our economic security and well-being. When one of every six jobs in this country is supported by Canadian exports, a foreign state that weaponizes trade is a direct threat to our people's jobs and livelihoods.

Canadian firms of all sizes and sectors are increasingly finding themselves in the crosshairs of foreign governments and businesses that seek to advance their own national interests by targeting trade, investment partnerships, critical infrastructure, or access to technology.

These foreign industrial policies and targeted trade measures are protectionist in nature, and, over time, will have a substantial impact on Canadian businesses and our economic security.

Economic resilience is equally critical when it comes to agriculture. When faced with threats of economic uncertainty, Canadians worry about food security.

For generations, this nation has been a global leader in agriculture exports. Despite boasting coveted agriculture resources, our global competitiveness is slipping even as we continue to improve production efficiency. From 2022 to 2023, the sector dropped from fifth to eighth largest global exporter, and from producing 10 per cent of the country's GDP to seven per cent. Today, the uncertainty of U.S. tariffs—combined with the self-imposed Canadian maze

of costly regulations—is eroding investor confidence.

Agriculture is relatively resilient, making it a buffer during economic downturns. Canada can be an agriculture powerhouse, yet we underestimate, over-regulate, and undervalue the sector. We should be grabbing the brass ring, and realizing the opportunity offered by increased capital investment.

With a shift in focus to national security and preparations to weather an economic conflict, it is time to unleash agriculture's potential.

Health is a determinant of national security. A country's ability to protect its sovereignty is linked to the well-being of its people and the capability of its health systems.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to embed health security as a foundational element of national security given global population mobility, international economic interdependence, and a changing geopolitical landscape.

Healthy societies are stable societies with economically productive workforces. Attacks on healthcare security, such as mis- and dis-information or cyberattacks on healthcare institutions are attacks on national security. Accordingly, the concept of health security must expand beyond the traditional public health lens to include strengthening critical health infrastructure resilience, investing in healthcare system cybersecurity, re-shoring Canada's life sciences and biomanufacturing ecosystem, securing supply chains, and enhancing healthcare system readiness.

A comprehensive Team Canada approach is essential to address the evolving challenges to our sovereignty. By broadening conversations about national security beyond the military to include sectors such as agriculture, business, and health care, we can strengthen our national identity, build resilience, and safeguard Canada's future against economic pressures and external threats.

The upcoming series will provide a deeper look at these essential sectors.

Senator Rebecca Patterson is a retired rear-admiral and a veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces with 34 years of service. Senator Krista Ann Ross has been named to the Chamber of Commerce Executives of Canada's Council of Excellence, as well as twice named Chamber Executive of the Year in Canada, and named a Top 50 CEO for Atlantic Canada. Senator Mary Robinson is a proud Prince Edward Islander who is a former managing partner of a sixth-generation family farm operation. In 2021, she was named one of the Top 25 Most Powerful Women in Atlantic Canada by Atlantic Business Magazine. Senator Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler is an internationally renowned surgeon, and a dedicated advocate for health and health care. All four senators belong to the Canadian Senators Group.

The Hill Times



If compassion alone no longer motivates action, perhaps enlightened self-interest will. Unchecked global hunger and malnutrition threaten Canada's security and economic interests through increased migration pressures, instability, disease outbreaks, and weakened international partnerships, writes Onome Ako. *Photograph courtesy of Waseem Lazknaï/Pixabay*

From compassion to complacency: Canada's dangerous retreat from global aid

The U.S.'s recent actions illustrate the stark consequences of blanket cuts; for just Action Against Hunger Canada's programs, it will result in more than five million children in conflict zones losing access to crucial nutrition services.

Nearly four decades ago, Live Aid galvanized the world, as nearly two billion viewers tuned in to fight famine unfolding in Ethiopia. Canadians responded powerfully, compelled by the distressing images of starvation. It was an undeniable call to action that united aid groups, communities, and even schoolchildren across the country.

Today, the global response to such crises is markedly different.

United States President Donald Trump recently announced an unprecedented 90 per cent cut to American foreign aid, a critical source representing 42 per cent of global development spending. The United Kingdom's Labour government announced a £6-billion reduction; and traditionally supportive nations like Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium are implementing deep cuts, as well. In Canada, discussions about reducing foreign aid have similarly gained political traction.

These cuts come amid redirected priorities, often shifting resources toward military spending or domestic issues. Yet,

the crises akin to the Ethiopian famine persist today: countries like Yemen, South Sudan, and Somalia continue to grapple with devastating food shortages. Despite the continuing need, the global response has become indifferent. If Ethiopia's tragedy unfolded today, many would simply switch channels.

Why such apathy?

Today's media environment, with its relentless exposure to global emergencies, has understandably desensitized audiences. Canadians are also increasingly focused inward, confronting their own economic concerns, from rising housing costs to issues like the homelessness and the opioid crisis. Moreover, international trade tensions—such as U.S. tariffs—occupy significant political attention. There's a prevailing sentiment that Canada must first address its domestic issues before extending support abroad.

However, the humanitarian sector itself bears some responsibility. It has inadequately communicated how effective aid directly

contributes to global security, stability, and economic benefits, leaving many to view such investments as wasteful.

Yet, perception isn't always reality. Aid programs have never been more advanced or effective. Initiatives like SMART (Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transition), led by Action Against Hunger, offer precise, real-time assessments of global malnutrition, ensuring aid reaches precisely where it's most needed. SMART surveys enable governments and NGOs to act swiftly and strategically, avoiding waste and maximizing impact.

Furthermore, effective responses to hunger and malnutrition crises are already known: families need nutrition-rich diets, reliable access to essential health services, and investments in poverty reduction, which directly combats the root causes of malnutrition.

The blanket aid cuts we're currently witnessing are problematic precisely because they fail to distinguish between ineffective

programs and those making tangible differences.

The U.S.'s recent actions illustrate the stark consequences of blanket cuts; for just Action Against Hunger Canada's programs, it will result in more than five million children in conflict zones losing access to crucial nutrition services; 1.5 million severely malnourished children will lose lifesaving treatments, leading directly to an estimated 280,000 preventable deaths; and thousands of local health workers will lose critical training and resources. Already, mothers and their malnourished infants are being turned away from Action Against Hunger's treatment centres.

From afar, aid reductions might appear fiscally responsible, but on the ground, they're devastating. Historically, Canadians have shown compassion and commitment to humanitarian causes. Today, 733 million people face hunger globally, an injustice that once would have sparked widespread action.

If compassion alone no longer motivates action, perhaps enlightened self-interest will. Unchecked global hunger and malnutrition threaten Canada's security and economic interests through increased migration pressures, instability, disease outbreaks, and weakened international partnerships.

Whether driven by humanitarian impulses or self-interest, addressing global hunger and malnutrition is neither wasteful nor optional. Instead, it's an investment in a safer, more stable, and prosperous global community—something in Canada's clear interest.

Onome Ako is chief executive officer of Action Against Hunger Canada. The Canada office is one of eight that comprises the Action Against Hunger International Network.

The Hill Times

Onome
Ako



Opinion

Liberal and Conservative safe seats likely to stay, but NDP less certain, say pollsters

There are 111 safe seats across Canada, based on wins by candidates with a margin of 25 per cent of the vote or greater in the previous federal election in 2021.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Going into the federal election with the most safe seats—based on win percentages in ridings from the 2021 election—could be a mixed bag for the Conservatives, while New Democrat candidates are likely to feel the pinch this time around, according to analysts and pollsters.

“It’s a political flex by winning big, but it’s a curse because [it’s] better to win a whole bunch of ridings by five per cent than to win a whole bunch of ridings by 25 per cent,” said Nik Nanos, founder and chief data scientist of Nanos Research. “Because you roll up these big wins in Alberta and

the West and so forth, and it pumps up the national numbers for the Conservatives when it comes to percentage support, but it’s inefficient at converting into seats.”

Election campaigns are now in full swing as Canada prepares for the 45th general election on April 28.

Based on an analysis of Elections Canada’s transposed ridings in 2025, conducted by *The Hill Times*, there are 111 ridings that could be considered safe seats for different parties going into the election,

based on wins by candidates with a margin of 25 per cent of the vote or greater in the last federal election in 2021.

Conservative candidates won 56 of the safest seats in the 2021 contest, with the widest margins achieved in the riding of Souris—Moose Mountain, Sask., by then-MP Robert Kitchen, with 66.84 per cent, followed by MP Jeremy Patzer with 62.18 in the riding then-known as Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Sask., which has been renamed Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley following the 2022 federal electoral redistribution.

The Liberals won 40 of the safe seats last time around, with the largest margin of victory for party candidates achieved by MP Tricia Lattanzio who is running again in the riding of Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Que., with 59.14 of the vote.

The Bloc Québécois won 12 seats by a margin of greater than 25 per cent in 2021, and the NDP won three by that margin.

Nanos told *The Hill Times* that safe seats for the Conservatives means a secure base in some regions, which allows the party to direct their election efforts elsewhere.

“They have a regional base in the West [and] it allows them to wage war in other parts of the country. Operationally and strategically,

it’s an advantage for the Conservatives because there are just certain parts of the country—because they’ve had such large wins, and traditionally have such large wins—that they basically need a caretaker campaign in those areas, and that they can focus on areas that are more likely to be up for grabs,” he said.

Nanos said that the NDP is in a difficult position based on recent polling data, and

The 111 Safe Seats Won by 25% or More in 2021, Transposed in New Ridings

Riding	Province/Territory	Winning Party	Vote %	Runner-up Party	Winning Margin
Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	Conservative Party of Canada	76.01%	People's Party of Canada	66.84
Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley	Saskatchewan	Conservative Party of Canada	72.46%	New Democratic Party	62.18
Battle River—Crowfoot	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	71.38%	New Democratic Party	61.68
Bow River	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	69.57%	People's Party of Canada	59.72
Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	69.60%	Conservative Party of Canada	59.14
Lakeland	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	69.40%	People's Party of Canada	58.34
Grande Prairie	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	68.96%	New Democratic Party	57.11
Foothills	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	68.43%	New Democratic Party	57.03
Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	Conservative Party of Canada	68.79%	New Democratic Party	56.68
Fort McMurray—Cold Lake	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	67.81%	People's Party of Canada	55.11
Ponoka—Didsbury	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	67.87%	People's Party of Canada	54.52
Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake	Saskatchewan	Conservative Party of Canada	67.26%	New Democratic Party	54.35
Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek	Saskatchewan	Conservative Party of Canada	68.00%	New Democratic Party	53.97
Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	65.80%	New Democratic Party	51.90
Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	Liberal Party of Canada	64.96%	Conservative Party of Canada	51.11
Peace River—Westlock	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	62.65%	New Democratic Party	49.49
Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	Conservative Party of Canada	64.09%	New Democratic Party	49.07
Scarborough North	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	66.98%	Conservative Party of Canada	48.89
Parkland	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	63.09%	New Democratic Party	46.81
Leduc—Wetaskiwin	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	63.37%	New Democratic Party	45.77
Yellowhead	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	60.23%	New Democratic Party	45.57
Calgary Shepard	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	61.20%	New Democratic Party	45.17
Airdrie—Cochrane	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	59.90%	New Democratic Party	44.97
Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies	British Columbia	Conservative Party of Canada	59.33%	New Democratic Party	44.96
Riding Mountain	Manitoba	Conservative Party of Canada	59.19%	New Democratic Party	44.68
Honoré-Mercier	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	59.99%	Bloc Québécois	43.71
Humber River—Black Creek	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	60.69%	Conservative Party of Canada	43.29
Red Deer	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	60.51%	New Democratic Party	43.15
Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan	Saskatchewan	Conservative Party of Canada	60.99%	New Democratic Party	42.06
Calgary Midnapore	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	60.27%	New Democratic Party	41.73
Bourassa	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	60.39%	Bloc Québécois	41.69
Calgary Heritage	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	58.32%	New Democratic Party	41.05
Saint-Laurent	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	59.35%	Conservative Party of Canada	41.03
Calgary Signal Hill	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	59.81%	Liberal Party of Canada	40.43
Scarborough—Guildwood—Rouge Park	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	61.28%	Conservative Party of Canada	39.22
Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	Conservative Party of Canada	59.37%	New Democratic Party	38.98
Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel—Alnôbak	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	54.80%	Liberal Party of Canada	37.90

Continued on page 32

“IT’S A POLITICAL FLEX BY WINNING BIG, BUT IT’S A CURSE BECAUSE [IT’S] BETTER TO WIN A WHOLE BUNCH OF RIDINGS BY FIVE PER CENT THAN TO WIN A WHOLE BUNCH OF RIDINGS BY 25 PER CENT.”

— Nik Nanos

The 111 Safe Seats Won by 25% or More in 2021, Transposed in New Ridings (continued)

Riding	Province/Territory	Winning Party	Vote %	Runner-up Party	Winning Margin
Scarborough—Woburn	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	60.41%	Conservative Party of Canada	37.86
Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	Conservative Party of Canada	60.28%	New Democratic Party	37.61
Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman	Manitoba	Conservative Party of Canada	56.97%	New Democratic Party	37.55
Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	57.96%	Conservative Party of Canada	37.36
Lac-Saint-Louis	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	56.26%	Conservative Party of Canada	37.36
Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière	Quebec	Conservative Party of Canada	56.71%	Bloc Québécois	37.10
Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	57.55%	New Democratic Party	36.91
Vancouver East	British Columbia	New Democratic Party	56.40%	Liberal Party of Canada	36.64
Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	52.23%	Bloc Québécois	36.51
Hull—Aylmer	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	52.46%	Bloc Québécois	36.36
Lethbridge	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	55.65%	New Democratic Party	36.34
Beauséjour	New Brunswick	Liberal Party of Canada	55.54%	Conservative Party of Canada	36.11
Pierrefonds—Dollard	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	56.01%	Conservative Party of Canada	35.18
Markham—Thornhill	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	61.54%	Conservative Party of Canada	35.15
Calgary Nose Hill	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	55.32%	Liberal Party of Canada	35.09
Calgary East	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	52.86%	Liberal Party of Canada	34.32
Brossard—Saint-Lambert	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	54.10%	Bloc Québécois	34.16
Beaches—East York	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	56.58%	New Democratic Party	34.05
Etobicoke North	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	58.88%	Conservative Party of Canada	33.44
Mount Royal	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	57.41%	Conservative Party of Canada	33.34
Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	51.37%	New Democratic Party	33.28
Calgary Crowfoot	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	54.94%	Liberal Party of Canada	33.25
Montcalm	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	53.22%	Liberal Party of Canada	33.24
York South—Weston—Etobicoke	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	55.58%	Conservative Party of Canada	33.10
Joliette—Manawan	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	55.14%	Liberal Party of Canada	32.85
Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	52.83%	New Democratic Party	32.76
St. Albert—Sturgeon River	Alberta	Conservative Party of Canada	56.03%	New Democratic Party	32.48
Rimouski—La Matapédia	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	54.30%	Liberal Party of Canada	32.21
Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk	Quebec	Conservative Party of Canada	52.03%	Bloc Québécois	31.90
Cape Spear	Newfoundland and Labrador	Liberal Party of Canada	54.72%	New Democratic Party	31.60
Edmonton Strathcona	Alberta	New Democratic Party	57.95%	Conservative Party of Canada	31.18
Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	56.32%	Conservative Party of Canada	30.99
Provencher	Manitoba	Conservative Party of Canada	48.34%	People's Party of Canada	30.85
Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	52.63%	Conservative Party of Canada	30.80
Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	Conservative Party of Canada	51.17%	New Democratic Party	30.77
Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	Conservative Party of Canada	52.15%	People's Party of Canada	30.27
Ajax	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	56.83%	Conservative Party of Canada	30.23

Source: Elections Canada

Riding	Province/Territory	Winning Party	Vote %	Runner-up Party	Winning Margin
Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	Conservative Party of Canada	52.83%	Liberal Party of Canada	30.18
Beauce	Quebec	Conservative Party of Canada	48.29%	People's Party of Canada	30.10
Beloeil—Chambly	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	53.53%	Liberal Party of Canada	30.10
Laval—Les Îles	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	48.93%	Bloc Québécois	29.85
Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	54.32%	Liberal Party of Canada	29.61
Elgin—St. Thomas—London South	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	49.25%	Liberal Party of Canada	29.60
Ahuntsic-Cartierville	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	51.91%	Bloc Québécois	29.28
Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis	Quebec	Conservative Party of Canada	52.00%	Bloc Québécois	29.24
Rivière-du-Nord	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	51.60%	Liberal Party of Canada	29.13
Laurentides—Labelle	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	52.31%	Liberal Party of Canada	28.84
Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Quebec	Conservative Party of Canada	52.35%	Bloc Québécois	28.61
Brampton West	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	56.29%	Conservative Party of Canada	28.57
Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	49.50%	New Democratic Party	28.55
Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	54.26%	Liberal Party of Canada	28.41
Surrey Newton	British Columbia	Liberal Party of Canada	54.43%	New Democratic Party	28.35
Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	51.97%	Liberal Party of Canada	28.11
Drummond	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	46.62%	Liberal Party of Canada	27.84
Vimy	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	50.14%	Bloc Québécois	27.80
Papineau	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	50.30%	New Democratic Party	27.62
Don Valley West	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	57.23%	Conservative Party of Canada	27.32
Moncton—Dieppe	New Brunswick	Liberal Party of Canada	49.67%	Conservative Party of Canada	27.24
Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	56.24%	Conservative Party of Canada	27.07
Lévis—Lotbinière	Quebec	Conservative Party of Canada	49.70%	Bloc Québécois	26.88
Gatineau	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	50.05%	Bloc Québécois	26.64
Vaudreuil	Quebec	Liberal Party of Canada	47.47%	Bloc Québécois	26.51
Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	50.61%	Liberal Party of Canada	26.50
Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	47.93%	Liberal Party of Canada	26.28
Oxford	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	46.79%	Liberal Party of Canada	26.11
Ottawa—Vanier—Gloucester	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	49.00%	New Democratic Party	25.74
Lac-Saint-Jean	Quebec	Bloc Québécois	50.90%	Conservative Party of Canada	25.64
Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	46.50%	New Democratic Party	25.51
Winnipeg North	Manitoba	Liberal Party of Canada	53.21%	New Democratic Party	25.46
Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	Quebec	New Democratic Party	48.57%	Liberal Party of Canada	25.41
Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes	Ontario	Conservative Party of Canada	50.53%	Liberal Party of Canada	25.33
Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna	British Columbia	Conservative Party of Canada	48.35%	Liberal Party of Canada	25.13
Richmond—Arthabaska	Quebec	Conservative Party of Canada	49.88%	Bloc Québécois	25.13
Mississauga Centre	Ontario	Liberal Party of Canada	53.88%	Conservative Party of Canada	25.03

Liberal and Conservative safe seats likely to stay, but NDP less certain, say pollsters



Prime Minister Mark Carney, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, and Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

by who Canadians think could best manage the binational relationship," he said. "Trump is a lightning rod that is a bit of an economic catch-all for everything that Canadians are worried about right now, and I think that's why, even if they might be angry with the Liberals or disappointed with the Liberals ... they're probably going to be not rendering judgment on the past, but actually rendering judgment that is more focused on the future."

Earl Washburn, senior analyst at EKOS Research, told *The Hill Times* that he doesn't expect either the Liberal or Conservative safe seats to change much in this election, but when it comes to the NDP, it's hard to see if any seats are truly safe.

"The NDP is, right now, polling single digits, which is less than half of what they won last time, and what they normally do," he said. "The NDP normally gets between 15 and 20 per cent of the vote. That's good enough, usually, for 30 seats or so. But once you get into single digits, that's when the bottom falls out."

Eric Grenier, polling analyst of *The Writ*, told *The Hill Times* that "it's harder to find safe NDP seats these days," when considering recent shifts in polls.

Data released by Abacus Data on March 23 showed the Conservatives holding a narrow lead nationally at 39 per cent, with the Liberals close behind at 36 per cent, and the NDP trailing at 12 per cent. The NDP is hitting its lowest support level since Singh became leader in 2017, indicating "a significant loss of momentum at precisely the moment the campaign begins in earnest," according to Abacus. The polling and market research firm also reported that the Liberals have gained "noticeable ground" in key regions such as Ontario and British Columbia, and "enjoy a large lead" in Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

Grenier said that the Conservatives having so many safe ridings is also the main reason why "vote inefficiency" for the party is so great.

"The Conservatives run up their numbers in a lot of these ridings and it boosts their popular vote number across the country, but it just means that they don't get as many seats out of them as the Liberals do," he said. "Liberals win more by smaller margins and the Conservatives win fewer seats, but by bigger margins."

Grenier argued that the safe seats for the Bloc Québécois are likely still safe, but the NDP can't count on the same for their safe seats.

"There might be some seats that are safe because of the demographics of them, like a rural riding in Saskatchewan or Alberta, and some seats might be safe because of the name on the ballot. I'm thinking of someone like [NDP MP] Alexandre Boulerice in Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, (Quebec)," said Grenier.

"He's someone who, despite all of the movement we've seen in the polls for the NDP in Quebec over 18 years, his vote has remained pretty solid. [For] some incumbents ... they have more to do with it than the party brand."

jcnockaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Continued from page 30

that the party will be "squeezed like they've never been squeezed before." This could be a difficult election for the NDP because Leader Jagmeet Singh—who is running again in the renamed riding of Burnaby Central, B.C.—is arguably more strongly connected to former prime Minister Justin Trudeau than current Prime Minister Mark Carney, according to Nanos.

"Before, it would just be strategic voting. They're going to have to deal with strategic voting, but now they're going to have to deal with the fact that they did spend the last four years propping up a Justin Trudeau government," said Nanos.

A major consideration among voters will also be which party leader they think could best navigate the relationship between Canada and the United States under current President Donald Trump, Nanos added.

"I think it's too early to tell what the trend is going to be, and I think the polling numbers are going to be much more volatile than we've seen in other elections because voter sympathies and loyalties may be overridden



Nik Nanos, founder and chief data scientist of Nanos Research, says Conservatives have a regional base in the West and 'they can focus on areas that are more likely to be up for grabs.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Earl Washburn, senior analyst at EKOS Research, says, 'The NDP normally gets between 15 and 20 per cent of the vote. That's good enough, usually, for 30 seats or so. But once you get into single digits, that's when the bottom falls out.' Photograph courtesy of Earl Washburn

Ministers, ex-cabinet members and leadership aspirants seek to hold bellwethers for Liberals



Former minister Sean Fraser has changed his mind about leaving political office, and will reoffer in Central Nova, N.S. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Continued from page 6

ran as the party's candidate in the 2022 Mississauga—Lakeshore, Ont. byelection. Based on transposed results from the 2021 election onto the 2025 boundaries, Anand has a slightly higher margin to defend—while she had a 6.1 percentage point margin in Oakville in 2021, her margin is 6.78 points in Oakville East.

Further west along Lake Ontario, Karina Gould, who placed third in this year's Liberal leadership contest and who sat in cabinet between 2017-2025, will reoffer in Burlington, Ont. Burlington is one of the longest-standing bellwethers in the country, having elected a member of the governing party in every election since 1984.

The 2025 election in Burlington will be a rematch of the 2021 contest between Gould and Conservative candidate Emily Brown, a mathematics professor at Sheridan College's Pilon School of Business. Gould won the riding in 2021 with 45.7 per cent of the vote to Brown's 37.3 per cent.

Burlington is one of 15 Ontario ridings unchanged by

the 2022 redistribution, meaning that Gould's margin is also unchanged.

The Conservative Party is bringing current and former MPs to Brown's aid in an attempt to flip the seat. Last week, the Burlington Conservative Association advertised a March 29 campaign office grand opening and barbecue featuring former Conservative leader Andrew Scheer, former Conservative Burlington MP Mike Wallace, and ex-Liberal MP Dan McTeague, who is currently the president of oil and gas lobby group Canadians for Affordable Energy.

Polling aggregator 338Canada's district-by-district projections last week showed the Liberals ahead in all 34 bellwether ridings. The party is most vulnerable in:

- Cambridge, Ont., where former parliamentary secretary Bryan May is seeking a fourth term;
- London West, Ont., contested by Kayabaga for a second time;
- Eglinton—Lawrence, Ont., the riding of departing MP and current PMO chief of staff Marco Mendicino, which does not have

“Over the course of my life, Central Nova has been Liberal once before I was elected in 2015... this is not a Liberal stronghold. You can take nothing for granted.”

— Sean Fraser

a Liberal-nominated candidate at the time of publication;

- Mississauga—Lakeshore, Ont., where Charles Sousa will face his first general federal election after winning a 2022 byelection;

- Nipissing—Timiskaming, Ont., where Pauline Rochefort will try to retain the seat held by former House Speaker Anthony Rota; and

- York Centre, Ont., where former mental health minister Ya'ara Saks will run for the third time.

Kayabaga's riding is the most vulnerable of the bellwethers based on an Elections Canada transposition of the 2021 votes to the 2025 boundaries. While Kayabaga won London West with a 4.42-point margin in the 2021 election, the redistribution has narrowed that margin to only 2.72 points.

Mortgage broker Adam Benni will contest London West for the Conservatives, while Unifor Ontario Regional Council chair Shinade Alder has been nominated for the NDP.

Alder's team received a boost from NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh's visit to her office

on March 26, the fourth day of the campaign. Alder also joined Singh at a campaign announcement in Windsor, Ont., on March 27.

Kayabaga, meanwhile, appeared with Liberal Leader Mark Carney at a campaign stop in the neighbouring riding of London-Fanshawe, Ont., on March 26. The pair were joined by Peter Fragiskatos—who is reoffering in the nearby bellwether of London Centre, Ont.—and London-Fanshawe Liberal candidate Najam Naqvi, who is aiming to unseat NDP incumbent Lindsay Mathyssen.

Earlier in the week, Carney campaigned in Central Nova, N.S., a bellwether since 2006. The riding, which was recreated in 2004 after a prior abolition, was also previously a bellwether from 1984-1993. In its current incarnation, two MPs have held the riding: former Conservative minister and one-time leadership candidate Peter MacKay, from 2004-2015; and Liberal former immigration and housing minister Sean Fraser from 2015 onwards.

Fraser had announced in December that he would not seek re-election. However, he changed his mind and on March 25 announced he would seek a fourth term, pushing out Graham Murray as the party's candidate for the seat.

During interviews with reporters on March 25, Fraser characterized his riding as a former “Conservative stronghold.” The riding that largely replaced Central Nova in 1997—Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, N.S.—was represented by MacKay for the Progressive Conservatives, then the Conservatives, between 1997 and its abolition in 2004.

“When [former prime minister] Brian Mulroney—who became a friend of mine before he passed away—wanted a safe seat when he had become the leader of the Conservatives in the 1980s, he actually got Elmer MacKay step to step aside so he could be the MP here,” Fraser said, referring to Mulroney's representation of the seat between 1983 and 1984. “Over the course of my life, it's been Liberal once before I was elected in 2015... this is not a Liberal stronghold. You can take nothing for granted.”

Fraser said he decided to reoffer because Carney had asked him to. He had initially quit because he wanted to spend more time at home with his young children, but said the prime minister provided “assurances and comfort that I'm going to be able to be closer to home than I was over the course of the past few years and still make a contribution to the country that we all love.”

“I was concerned about being apart from my family for the four years that may follow,” he said. “Having had the conversation and given very real assurances that I could work with the prime minister to develop an arrangement that allows me to be closer to home than I was previously is the kind of thing that makes this possible for me.”

sjeffery@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Carney's 24-member cabinet

Fourteen members of Prime Minister Mark Carney's cabinet won election in 2021 by a margin of more than 15 percentage points when transposed onto the new electoral map.

BY NEIL MOSS

Prime Minister Mark Carney's new cabinet largely has a safe path towards re-election, with only a couple of Ontario seats within the Conservatives' reach.

Just four cabinet ministers are running in ridings that the Liberal Party won by a margin of less than 10 percentage points in the 2021 contest.

A *The Hill Times* analysis transposed Elections Canada's results from the last federal general election onto the new ridings boundaries.

First time cabinet minister Arielle Kayabaga—the new government House leader—is seeking re-election in London West, Ont., which she would have won in 2021 by a margin of 2.72 percentage points based on the new boundaries.

In 2021, she defeated Conservative runner-up and former Ontario MPP Rob Flack. This time around, Kayabaga faces Adam Benni, a mortgage broker. The NDP candidate is Shinaide Alder, who serves as chair of Unifor's Ontario regional council.

Former NDP staffer Cameron Holmstrom said he doesn't think a couple of weeks as a cabinet minister will have much of a boost at the ballot box.

"For most people like ridings in London West, they're not judging you based on now being a cabinet minister. They are looking at what you were for the last four years," said Holmstrom, now a principal at Niipaawi Strategies.

He said there is little Kayabaga could have accomplished in her short time in cabinet that could either raise her profile or sink it compared to her broader profile since being elected in 2021.

"It's such a small body of work," he said, remarking that it is made increasingly smaller due to Parliament being prorogued. "Cabinet ministers like her have never taken a question from an opposition member, have never had to go before committee

to testify, have never had to do any of these things that cabinet ministers do."

While the government of former Liberal prime minister Justin Trudeau lost cabinet ministers in the 2021 and 2019 elections—Bernadette Jordan and Maryam Monsef in 2021, and Ralph Goodale and Amarjeet Sohi in 2019—prospects for electoral peril are less likely in 2025.

More than 150 kilometres east of London in Oakville, Ont., Innovation Minister Anita Anand's new riding of Oakville East, Ont., would have been won by a margin of 6.78 percentage points.

Anand defeated Conservative challenger Kerry Colborne in 2021. She is now facing off against former police officer Ron Chhinzer. The NDP candidate is Toronto Metropolitan University student Hailey Ford.

The two Ontario constituencies of London West and Oakville East are two of the five

ridings held by cabinet ministers that polling aggregator Canada338 has deemed "likely" for the Liberals—all others are judged to be "safe" ridings.

The other three "likely" Liberal ridings are Nepean, Ont., where Prime Minister Mark Carney is running, Mississauga—Streetsville, Ont., which is held by Chief Government Whip Rechie Valdez, and Public Services and Procurement Minister Ali Ehsassi's Willowdale, Ont.



Nate Erskine-Smith
56.58%



Arielle Kayabaga
36.87%



Anita Anand
46.22%



Bill Blair
57.96%



Mélanie Joly
51.91%



In Quebec, Veterans Affairs and Canada Revenue Minister Élisabeth Brière would have won her 2021 race in Sherbrooke by a margin of 8.52 percentage points based on the new boundaries. She was first elected in 2019 unseating then-NDP MP Pierre-Luc Dusseault, and winning re-election in 2021 after defeating Bloc Québécois challenger Ensaf Haidar. This time around, the Bloc candidate is actor Pierre-Étienne Rouillard.



Steven Guilbeault
39.51%

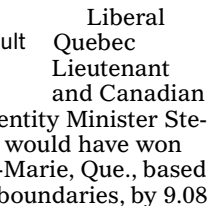
Culture and Identity Minister Steven Guilbeault would have won Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que., based on new riding boundaries, by 9.08 percentage points in 2021 when he defeated NDP challenger Nimé Machouf. Guilbeault is once again facing off against Machouf.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, Fisheries and Oceans Min-



Kamal Khara
56.29%

ister Joanne Thompson is seeking re-election in St. John's East—a riding that was held by the NDP's Jack Harris from 2008 to 2015 and 2019 to 2021. Based on the new riding boundaries, Thompson would have defeated NDP challenger Marty Shortall by a margin of 10.3 percentage points. The NDP president will once again try to flip the riding orange.



Steven MacKinnon
50.05%

Carney's cabinet has ministers in seven provinces—British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec—but not in Alberta, Prince Edward Island, and Saskatchewan.



Joanne Thompson
45.14%

NDP collapse gives ministers safe paths to victory

Holmstrom said many of Carney's ministers ran in ridings that were safe to the Liberals, but as the federal public opinion has increasingly shifted behind the new prime minister,

those seats are now looking "beyond safe."

"They are super, uber safe at this point," he said, remarking that as the national NDP vote continues to diminish, it further protects the leads Liberals won with in 2021.

"I think the big change here for these cabinet ministers and their safety ... is the NDP," he said. "For a half dozen [cabinet ministers], their next big competitor is the NDP."

Holmstrom pointed to ridings held by

Guilbeault in Laurier-Sainte-Marie and Thompson in St. John's East as two that have become increasingly safe due to the collapse of the NDP vote—where the New Democrats finished second in 2021.

"Unfortunately, the NDP vote has fallen off a cliff [and] they get to be that much safer," he said.



David McGuinty
49.41%



Ginette Petitpas Taylor
49.67%



Chrystia Freeland
46.48%



Ali Ehsassi
51.19%

looks at safe path to re-election



Prime Minister Mark Carney and his 24-member cabinet faces few pitfalls in their individual path towards re-election.. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



Kody Blois
44.39%

about what you did the last 10 years in government. This isn't about how we feel about your performance. The whole question is who is best able to deal with Trump."

Holmstrom said that the safe path to victory that most cabinet ministers find themselves in will allow them to spend more time outside their ridings in battlegrounds.

While Carney forms the "A tour," his cabinet ministers will be the travelling "B tour," going riding to riding, boosting the ticket.



Patty Hajdu
40.40%

That "B tour" becomes "very valuable" in a snap campaign as money has to be spent wisely, Holmstrom said.

"They have to make the best of their resources," he said. "All of a sudden, those MPs, those cabinet ministers become very valuable in that sense."

The safest cabinet seats

More than half of Carney's cabinet would have won their 2021 elections by a margin of 15 percentage points based on new riding boundaries, including nine ministers whose margin of victory would have surpassed 20.

Justice and Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Gary Anandasangaree would



François-Philippe Champagne
42.45%

have had the largest margin of victory in his new riding of Scarborough-Guildwood-Rouge Park, Ont., with a margin of 39.22 percentage points. In 2021, he defeated Conservative challenger Zia Choudhary. This time around, he will face off against Suchita Jalan.

In his neighboring Toronto riding, Defence Minister Bill Blair would have had a margin of victory of 37.67 percentage points based on the new riding boundaries of Scarborough Southwest, Ont. In 2021, he defeated Mohsin Bhuiyan. In the April 28 vote, he will be up against Tory challenger Asm Tarun.

In New Brunswick, International Trade and Intergovern-



Gary Anandasangaree
61.28%

mental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc would have won the 2021 vote with a margin of 36.11 percentage points based on the new borders of Beauséjour. The veteran cabinet minister defeated Conservative challenger Shelly Mitchell in 2021. He will face Tory candidate Nathalie Vautour.

Back in Toronto, Housing Minister Nate Erskine-Smith would have won the riding of Beaches-East York, Ont., by a margin of 34.06 percentage points based on the new electoral map. In 2021, he defeated NDP challenger Alejandra Ruiz Vargas. This time, it will be NDP challenger Shannon Devine.

Mark Carney's riding of Nepean (won in 2021 by Chandra Arya 45.74%)

nmoos@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Mark Carney's riding of Nepean (won in 2021 by Chandra Arya 45.74%)

Where All the Cabinet Ministers are Running: 2025

Minister	Portfolio	MP Since	Riding	2021 Vote %	2021 Runner-up	2021 Margin	2021 Winning Margin
Gary Anandasangaree	Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs	2015	Scarborough—Guildwood—Rouge Park, Ont.	61.28%	CPC	39.22	2.72
Bill Blair	Minister of National Defence	2015	Scarborough Southwest, Ont.	57.96%	CPC	37.36	6.78
Dominic LeBlanc	Minister of International Trade and Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the King's Privy Council for Canada	2000	Beauséjour, N.B.	55.54%	CPC	36.11	8.52
Nate Erskine-Smith	Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities	2015	Beaches—East York, Ont.	56.58%	NDP	34.05	9.08
Mélanie Joly	Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development	2015	Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.	51.91%	Bloc	29.28	10.30
Kamal Khara	Minister of Health	2015	Brampton West, Ont.	56.29%	CPC	28.57	12.37
Ginette Petitpas Taylor	President of the Treasury Board	2015	Moncton—Dieppe, N.B.	49.67%	CPC	27.24	12.38
Steven MacKinnon	Minister of Jobs and Families	2015	Gatineau, Que.	50.05%	Bloc	26.64	12.69
David McGuinty	Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	2004	Ottawa South, Ont.	49.41%	CPC	22.45	13.02
Christia Freeland	Minister of Transport and Internal Trade	2013	University—Rosedale, Ont.	46.48%	NDP	18.41	14.15
Ali Ehsassi	Minister of Government Transformation, Public Services and Procurement	2015	Willowdale, Ont.	51.19%	CPC	17.34	15.31
Rachel Bendayan	Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	2019	Outremont, Que.	44.36%	NDP	17.06	15.45
Terry Duguid	Minister of Environment and Climate Change	2015	Winnipeg South, Man.	48.15%	CPC	15.45	17.06
Jonathan Wilkinson	Minister of Energy and Natural Resources	2015	North Vancouver—Capilano, B.C.	44.69%	CPC	15.31	17.34
Kody Blois	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Rural Economic Development	2019	Kings—Hants, N.S.	44.39%	CPC	14.15	18.41
Rechie Valdez	Chief Government Whip	2021	Mississauga—Streetsville, Ont.	47.34%	CPC	13.02	22.45
Patty Hajdu	Minister of Indigenous Services	2015	Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ont.	40.40%	NDP	12.69	26.64
François-Philippe Champagne	Minister of Finance	2015	Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Que.	42.45%	Bloc	12.38	27.24
Mark Carney*	Prime Minister	N/A	Nepean, Ont.	45.74%	CPC	12.37	28.57
Joanne Thompson	Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard	2021	St. John's East, N.L.	45.14%	NDP	10.3	29.28
Steven Guilbeault	Minister of Canadian Culture and Identity, Parks Canada and Quebec Lieutenant	2019	Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Que.	39.51%	NDP	9.08	34.05
Élisabeth Brière	Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canada Revenue Agency	2019	Sherbrooke, Que.	37.53%	Bloc	8.52	36.11
Anita Anand	Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry	2019	Oakville East, Ont.	46.22%	CPC	6.78	37.36
Arielle Kayabaga	Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Democratic Institutions	2021	London West, Ont.	36.87%	CPC	2.72	39.22

*Chandra Arya ran in Nepean in 2021, but was removed as a candidate by the Liberal Party over alleged ties to India, *The Globe and Mail* reported on March 26, 2025.

Source: Elections Canada data, based on the transposition of all ridings in 2025, compiled by The Hill Times' Stephen Jeffery and Samantha Wright Allen. Note: winning margin is the difference in percentage points between the first and second-place candidates.

In ridings where cabinet ministers face the greater challenge from Conservatives, the New Democrat vote still will have an impact.



Rachel Bendayan
44.36%

"That NDP vote is going down across the board. You take that off the table and most of it is going red. It just strengthens their position that much more," Holmstrom said.

He said that re-election of Carney's cabinet will not be a referendum on how voters feel about its performance in the early days.

"If you're one of those cabinet ministers, you might be in a relatively safe seat before, but now if every single one of these cabinet ministers will be re-elected, I would argue that it has more to do with the general campaign and the mood where things are at far more than their actual performance as ministers," he said. "This isn't about past record. This isn't



Terry Duguid
48.15%



Jonathan Wilkinson
44.69%

FEATURE

Pen to paper: recent letter of intent formalizes plan to create Indigenous Peoples Space

The plan to turn 100 Wellington St. into an Indigenous Peoples Space was first announced in 2017, but until recently, it had yet to be formally set out on paper.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Long-signalled plans to transform the historic 100 Wellington St. into a space for Indigenous Peoples were finally agreed to in ink with the recent letter of intent signed by the federal government and national Indigenous groups, with representatives hailing the plan's formalization as a "critical step" forward.

The Liberal government's intent to create an Indigenous Peoples Space was first announced back in 2017, but *The Hill Times* understands it had yet

to be formalized in writing until now, with the recent signing coming less than two weeks before the federal election call.

A previous plan to turn the long-vacant building into a national portrait gallery was scrapped in 2006 after the Conservatives unseated the Liberals to form government.

"We are pleased to have been able to formalize this partnership and hope that this documentation will help a future government support this work as an expression of Canada's relationship and partnership with Inuit, First Nations, and Métis," said the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) in an emailed statement to *The Hill Times*. "We expect this will lead to a formal lease that formalizes our stewardship of these spaces."

The letter of intent to establish an Indigenous Peoples Space across the street from Parliament Hill was signed by Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough-Rouge Park, Ont.), Métis National Council (MNC) president Victoria Pruden, Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National

Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak, and ITK President Natan Obed in Ottawa on March 5.

"Canada is in a period of change and this signing helps ensure the work can continue, no matter what changes might come," said Woodhouse Nepinak by email.

In a separate email to *The Hill Times*, Pruden called the letter of intent a "critical step" forward in formalizing the government's "commitment to creating a National Space for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis at 100 Wellington."

"It brings clarity and certainty to the project after years of announcements and evolving plans," said Pruden.

The building at 100 Wellington has been vacant since 1998, when the American embassy—which had occupied it since its construction in 1932—relocated to its current premises on Sussex Drive. The beaux-arts classical-style building, which sits directly across the street from Parliament Hill, was originally known as the United States Chancery, and is classified as a federal heritage building.

In 2001, Jean Chrétien's Liberal government approved a plan to turn the building into a national portrait gallery, and to that end spent more than \$6-million on engineering and architectural plans, and demolition work. But in 2006, after the Stephen Harper-led Conservatives formed government for the first time, those plans were scrapped, and the building continued to sit vacant for more than a decade.

After the Trudeau government came to power in 2015, consultations were launched on what to do with 100 Wellington, amid which the idea of turning it into a national portrait gallery was resurrected by a group of advocates.

Ultimately, in June 2017, then-prime minister Justin Trudeau announced the building would be transformed into a space for Indigenous Peoples, and that the government would work in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council on design and redevelopment.

At the time, a deadline of 2021 was set to finalize plans for the building's long-term use. In the meantime, a short-term plan to set up an exhibit showcasing Indigenous governance and culture on the ground floor, and meeting and press conferences spaces on the top floor were agreed to, requiring preliminary renovations to get the stripped-back building in working order.

Initial renovations in 100 Wellington were completed as planned by June 2019, but the project hit a roadblock that month when then-Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council (AANTC) grand chief Verna Polson launched a hunger strike and camped in front of the building, protesting the federal government's failure to involve the AANTC—upon whose ancestral territory the building sits—in its plans.

Polson's hunger strike ended that July after the government agreed to ensure the AANTC had a say in the project and a dedicated space of their own—specifically, an infill to be built on vacant space on the west side of the old U.S. embassy building—and to hold off on opening 100 Wellington until such an agreement was finalized.

It took until June 2024 for that agreement to be finalized and officially signed by Anandasangaree and chiefs of the AANTC.

The building has seen some use since 2019. In October 2022, the AFN, ITK, and MNC were invited to gain temporary access to 100 Wellington by Crown-Indigenous Relations and North-



The building in its gutted state in 2016. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright.



A new side entrance into the Indigenous Peoples Space built in 2019. *The Hill Times* photograph by Kate Malloy



Window art in the Indigenous Peoples' Space at 100 Wellington Street in Ottawa on Sept. 3, 2019. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Window art in the Indigenous Peoples' Space at 100 Wellington St. in Ottawa on Sept. 3, 2019. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

ern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), an offer only the ITK and MNC accepted, with the AFN instead having chosen "not to use the space or re-enter discussion on the long-term design and vision of 100 Wellington Street until an

FEATURE



The Indigenous Peoples Space, at 100 Wellington St., has taken a ‘critical step’ forward in becoming a reality. ‘Canada is in a period of change and this signing helps ensure the work can continue, no matter what changes might come,’ said AFN National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation” was subsequently “established at 119 Sparks,” access to which was transferred to the AANTC in October 2022.

Costs associated with setting up both temporary spaces totalled roughly \$6.5-million, according to PSPC.

This past December, both 100 Wellington and 119 Sparks were officially shuttered as a result of Block 2 construction work, which is also the cause of the current sidewalk closure along the south side of Wellington. The new complex being built within the city block bounded by Metcalfe, O’Connor, Wellington, and Sparks streets will house offices for parliamentarians and administration staff, as well as committee rooms and other multipurpose spaces. Block 2 construction is currently estimated to take until the early 2030s to complete.

At the recent March 5 event—held amid anticipation of an impending federal election call—Anandasangaree noted the hard work that had gone into finalizing the letter of intent, “especially in the last several weeks,” as the government pushed “to conclude these discussions and to enable us to sign off today on a very important institution.”

“More than symbolic gestures, these advancements are tangible commitments to honour the past and build a future where Indigenous history, culture, and perspectives are more central to our shared experience,” said Anandasangaree, noting the agreement would “solidify co-developing a permanent Indigenous presence here in the Parliamentary Precinct.”

“The development of this space has not been without its challenges. There have been some false starts and some pauses, but the agreements we are signing today signal a big step in the right direction,” he said.

Speaking at the event, the ITK’s Obed gave “special thanks” to “Minister Anandasangaree and his experience as a real estate lawyer in getting us to this letter of intent.”

“It has been challenging to come together,” said Obed of the project’s history. “We’re trying to work together across a number of different institutions that, while we share spaces together, we often do not undertake work and projects together. So for all of you, I appreciate the compromises along the way, and I also appreciate that nobody has given up on this initiative and this project.”

The finalized plan will see 100 Wellington and 119 Sparks together transformed into an Indigenous Peoples Space, and a separate infill dedicated to the AANTC built.

“This agreement gives [national Indigenous organizations] formal certainty over the space while the Parliamentary Precinct is under renovation and in the future,” said Anandasangaree’s office in an emailed statement to *The Hill Times*.

The letter establishes a “Collaborative Implementation Framework” which “lays out the roles and responsibilities” of CIRNAC, PSPC, as well as the AFN, MNC, and ITK. “It also details other key elements to advance the redevelop-

ment of the space, such as the project objectives, scope, delivery, and communications,” read the statement.

Next steps

The 2024 federal budget allocated \$4.2-million over two years, starting in 2024-25, to support Indigenous organizations in developing plans for the Indigenous Peoples Space.

Projected costs and timelines for creation of the space have yet to be determined, but, as noted, that city block will be shuttered until the 2030s.

The next steps for Indigenous organizations include figuring out the degree to which 100 Wellington and 119 Sparks will be overhauled and integrated, and what exactly the new Indigenous Peoples Space will include.

The renovations completed in 2019 got 100 Wellington into a usable state, but *The Hill Times* understands that the building still lacks running water, for example, and still bears features from its time as the site of the U.S. embassy, including the wood panelling that lines its second-floor walls.

“It is important that this space reflects who we are as First Nations, as leaders, and as partners in this country,” said Woodhouse Nepinak in her emailed statement. “As we move forward, we will keep pushing for a meaningful presence that reflects who we are, our priorities, and our leadership.”

At the March 5 event, Obed spoke to his hope that the new Indigenous Peoples Space will “provide specific accommodation from a diplomatic sense for the work that representatives of Indigenous Peoples do within this national capital space.”

“Hopefully, 100 Wellington will be a place where we can have many of these [intergovernmental] meetings, instead of going to Centre Block or West Block,” and hold events celebrating First Nations, Inuit, or Métis culture or society, he said.

“We are working to fill in a blank space, and sitting directly across from Centre Block, this is the best symbolic example that I believe Canada can make for the importance of the shared governance. It is now up to all of us who are signing these agreements today to make good on this ambition,” said Obed.

In her remarks at the event, Pruden noted the fact that Métis leader “Louis Riel, a passionate advocate for the rights and recognition of our people, was never able to take his rightful seat in Parliament.”

“This is one of the reasons why this space is so important,” she said. “This effort extends beyond governance; it is about self-determination, and it is about a space to continue to passionately push self-determination, self-government agreements and intergovernmental conversations together.”

Pruden noted the MNC “remains committed to ensuring that the space can be used by all Métis governments” across Canada.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Media were given a tour of the then-vacant 100 Wellington St. building in 2016. *The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright*



Original wood panelling on the second floor of 100 Wellington is seen during a 2016 media tour of the building. *The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright*

agreement was finalized with the Algonquin Nation,” the department explained in an email to *The Hill Times*. The ITK and MNC subsequently were able to use the building; ITK opened its doors for a one-day event in February 2023,

and between June and September 2024, the temporary exhibit at 100 Wellington was opened to the public on Wednesdays and Sundays.

In 2019, the then-recently vacated former CIBC Building at

119 Sparks St.—which backs onto 100 Wellington St.—was added to the mix and included as part of the project’s footprint. According to Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), a “similar exhibition and meeting space for

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

2025 ELECTION

Ex-staffers throw their names into the electoral ring

The list includes recent cabinet chief of staff Marianne Dandurand, who's running for the Liberals in her one-time boss' riding of Compton-Stanstead, Que.

Among the hundreds of Canadians who have put their names on ballots to run in the federal election are a number of former Hill staffers.

Then-prime minister Justin Trudeau's former deputy chief of staff, Marjorie Michel, recently announced her nomination as the Liberal candidate for her boss' old riding of Papineau, Que.

Michel bade farewell to the PMO, where she'd been one of two deputy chiefs of staff since October 2021, to join Liberal Party headquarters as deputy campaign director this past October. In January, Trudeau announced he would step down as Liberal leader, and soon after confirmed he would not seek re-election this year. Trudeau had represented Papineau, Que., in the House of Commons since 2008.

On March 20, *The Montreal Gazette* reported Michel would run to succeed Trudeau as the MP for Papineau. Michel noted her plans in a recent March 24 post on LinkedIn, writing that she was embarking "on a new chapter" in her "political journey."

"For nearly two decades, I have been actively engaged in politics in both Quebec and Canada. I have led numerous campaigns, supported several candidates, and gained valuable experience within the government. In this pivotal and delicate moment, I have chosen to stand up and contribute in a new way, fully committed to serving Quebec within a strong and united Canada," wrote Michel.

A former associate with Lisa Cardinal et Associés in Montreal and a former Quebec Liberal staffer, Michel began working for the Trudeau government in 2016, starting as a policy adviser to then-families, children, and social development minister Jean-Yves Duclos, who later promoted her to director of parliamentary affairs. After the 2019 election, Michel became chief of staff to Duclos as then-Treasury Board president. Off the Hill, Michel led Quebec operations for the federal Liberals during the 2019 and 2021 elections.

Michel is the daughter of former Haitian prime minister Smarck Michel, and is married

to outgoing Liberal MP Emmanuel Dubourg, who is not seeking re-election in Bourassa, Que.

In 2021, Trudeau was re-elected with 50.3 per cent of the vote, and a margin-of-victory of roughly 27.6 percentage points over the NDP challenger.

Running for the Liberals in the nearby riding of Pierre-Boucher-Les Patriotes-Verchères, Que., is Laurent de Casanove, who until recently was press secretary and senior communications adviser to Defence Minister Bill Blair.

A former political and protocol assistant at the Argentinian Embassy in Ottawa, de Casanove started on the Hill as an issues manager to then-heritage minister Pablo Rodriguez in early 2022. He's since also been press secretary to then-diversity, inclusion, and persons with disabilities minister Kamal Khara, and to Rodriguez as then-transport minister. De Casanove stayed on as press secretary during now-Innovation Minister Anita Anand's brief run as transport and internal trade minister.

In Pierre-Boucher-Les Patriotes-Verchères, de Casanove is going up against Bloc Québécois incumbent Xavier Barsalou-Duval, who has represented the riding in the House since 2015. In 2021, Barsalou-Duval was re-elected with roughly 54.3 per cent support, beating out the second-place Liberal candidate by a margin of roughly 28.4 percentage points.

Marianne Dandurand, who most recently became chief of staff to Revenue Minister Élisabeth Brière after the Dec. 20 cabinet shuffle, is running as the Liberal candidate in Compton-Stanstead, Que.

A former journalist, innkeeper, and communications adviser, Dandurand began working on the Hill as an assistant to outgoing Compton-Stanstead, Que., Liberal MP Marie-Claude Bibeau in 2021, and was hired as press secretary to Bibeau as then-agriculture minister after that year's federal election. Dandurand was later promoted to director of communications in Bibeau's agriculture office, a

title she took with her when she followed Bibeau to the national revenue portfolio in 2023.

Bibeau announced last October that she would not seek re-election federally and would instead run for mayor of Sherbrooke, Que., this year. First elected in 2015, Bibeau was re-elected in Compton-Stanstead in 2021 by roughly 36.7 per cent of the vote, besting the Bloc Québécois candidate by a margin of roughly 6.1 percentage points.

Patrick O'Hara is once again running for the Bloc Québécois, this time in the renamed riding of Châteauguay-Les Jardins-de Napierville, Que. O'Hara was the party's candidate in the then-named riding of Châteauguay-Lacolle, Que., during the last federal election, and briefly had a taste of victory before a judicial recount flipped the seat in favour of Liberal incumbent Brenda Shanahan. O'Hara lost by just 12 votes.

After the upset, O'Hara briefly joined Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet's office, but returned to work in the private sector after a few months.

Shanahan is not seeking re-election. Looking one province over to Ontario, former staffer Leslie Church is once again carrying the Liberal torch in Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont.

Church, who last worked on the Hill as chief of staff to then-deputy prime minister and finance minister Chrystia Freeland, first ran as the party's candidate in the central Toronto riding in a by-election

last year, and came second to Conservative Don Stewart by a margin of just 1.7 percentage points. Church subsequently joined Proof Strategies as a senior counselor.

A former head of communications and public affairs for Google Canada, Church began working for the Trudeau government in 2015, starting as chief of staff to then-heritage minister Mélanie Joly. Church spent 2019 as chief of staff to then-women and gender equality minister Maryam Monsef, and for almost a year

after that was chief of staff to then-public services and procurement minister Anita Anand. She first joined Freeland's office as director of policy in October 2020, but was soon after promoted to chief of staff.

Church has also previously worked in then-Liberal opposition leader Michael Ignatieff's office between 2008 and 2011, ending as director of communications.

Over in Mississauga Centre, Ont., ex-staffer Fares Al Soud has been nominated as the Liberal candidate.

A relatively newer staffer, Al Soud started on the Hill as a special assistant for operations to then-transport minister Omar Alghabra in January 2022, and has since also been a special assistant for tour and strategic planning in Trudeau's PMO, and a policy adviser to then-fisheries and oceans minister Diane Lebouthillier—his most recent role.

Alghabra, who has represented Mississauga Centre in the House since 2015, is among the more

than 60 incumbent MPs who aren't seeking re-election this year. Alghabra was re-elected in 2021 with roughly 54.2 per cent support, leading the second-place Conservative candidate by a margin of almost 26 percentage points.

Ex-staffer Garry Keller, who more recently has been a vice-president with StrategyCorp, has been nominated as the Conservative candidate for Nipissing-Timiskaming, Ont.

The riding's Liberal incumbent, MP Anthony Rota, is not seeking re-election after holding the riding in 2021 with 38.8 per cent of the vote, beating his Conservative challenger by a margin of just seven percentage points. Pauline Rochefort has been named as the Liberal candidate this election.

Keller was chief of staff to Rona Ambrose during her tenure as interim Conservative leader from 2015 to 2017. A former assistant to Reform-turned-Alliance-turned-Conservative MP John Williams, Keller overall has two decades of experience working on Parliament Hill. His more recent roles also include as chief of staff to John Baird as both then-foreign affairs minister and then-government House leader, executive director of the Conservative research bureau (then known as the Conservative Resource Group), and chief of staff to then-government whip Gordon O'Connor.

In December, Rahul Walia was acclaimed as the Liberal candidate for Winnipeg Centre, Man., where he will go up against NDP incumbent Leah Gazan.

Walia is a former regional adviser for the Pacific, Prairies, North, and Atlantic to Rodriguez as then-transport minister, and continued in the role under then-minister Anand through to the end of last year. Walia is also a former constituency assistant to Winnipeg South, Man., Liberal MP Terry Duguid, who was sworn in as minister of environment and climate change on March 24.

Gazan was re-elected in 2021 with roughly 50.3 per cent of the vote, winning by a margin of roughly 21.9 percentage points over the Liberal candidate.

Finally, Jennifer Lash, a former senior outreach adviser to then-environment minister Steven Guilbeault is running as the Liberal candidate for North Island-Powell River, B.C.

A former executive director of the Living Oceans Society and of the Sisu Institute, Lash worked for Guilbeault from the end of 2022 up until earlier this month.

NDP MP Rachel Blaney, who has represented North Island-Powell River in the House since 2015, is not seeking re-election.

Blaney won in 2021 with 39.5 per cent support; the Conservative challenger in that race came second with 36 per cent of the vote, followed by the Liberal candidate with 13.1 per cent. Taniell Johnston has been named as the NDP candidate in the riding this election.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Laurent de Casanove is the Liberal candidate for Pierre-Boucher-Les Patriotes-Verchères, Que. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Fares Al Soud is the Liberal candidate for Mississauga Centre, Ont. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Leslie Church is running for the Liberals again in Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont. Photograph courtesy of Proof Strategies



Marianne Dandurand is the Liberal candidate for Compton-Stanstead, Que. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Garry Keller is the Conservative candidate for Nipissing-Timiskaming, Ont. 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.

Christiane Fox to talk 'collaborative strategies for interprovincial trade' on April 3 in Toronto



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, pictured. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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.

Panel: 'Taiwan and Canada: Domestic Politics and International Relations'—The Institute for Peace & Diplomacy and Carleton University co-host "Taiwan and Canada: Domestic Politics and International Relations." A panel of scholars from Taiwan, the United States and Canada will engage in a discussion on the nexus of Taiwanese domestic politics and international relations, including Taiwan-U.S. and cross-straits relations, and implications for Canada-Taiwan ties. Tuesday, April 1, at 10 a.m. ET at Carleton University, Room 2017, Dunton Tower, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details via Eventbrite.

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.

FRIDAY, APRIL 4—SATURDAY, APRIL 26

Latin American Film Festival—The Group of Embassies of Latin American Countries in Canada hosts the 28th edition of the Latin American Film Festival featuring an extraordinary selection of film productions from 14 countries: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. Friday, April 4, to Saturday, April 26, at the Saint Paul University Amphitheatre G1124, 110 Hazel St. Details via Eventbrite.

SATURDAY, APRIL 5

Faithful Election Conversations—All Saints Anglican Church Westboro hosts "Faithful Election Conversations," exploring how might our faith shape the way we engage in public life, particularly as we approach the next federal election. Featuring a moderated panel and table group discussions. Saturday, April 5, at 3 p.m. ET at All Saints Anglican Church Westboro, 347 Richmond Rd. Details via Eventbrite.

Mark Bourrie to Discuss His New Book on Poilievre—Author Mark Bourrie will discuss his new book, *Ripper: The Making of Pierre Poilievre*, at a launch event hosted by Perfect Books. Saturday, April 5, at 7 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist, 154 Somerset St. W. Details: writersfestival.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

Workshop: 'Indigenous Peoples' Prosperity Across the Indo-Pacific'—The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada, and uOttawa's Centre for International Policy Studies host "The Prosperity of Indigenous Peoples Across the Indo-Pacific," a workshop on Indigenous economic empowerment, language revitalization, education, and Indigenous-museum relations. 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.

Lunch: 'Protecting Canada's Sovereignty'—Deputy Minister of National Defence Stefanie Beck and RCMP Senior Deputy Commissioner Bryan M. Larkin will take part in a roundtable lunch event, "Protecting Canada's Sovereignty: Balancing Power and Influence," hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, April 8, at 12 p.m. ET at 7 Yonge St., Suite 300. Details: cdhowe.org.

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

Lecture: 'The (Homegrown) Politics of Backlash in Canada'—Carleton University hosts the annual Vickers-Verduyn Lecture featuring Dr. Debra Thompson, Canada Research Chair in Racial Inequality in Democratic Societies at McGill University, who will speak on "From Black Lives Matter to the War on Woke: The (Homegrown) Politics of Backlash in Canada." She will explore the collapse of old political norms, the uncertainty of emerging alternatives, the influence of U.S. culture wars, and whether Canadian democracy can withstand the challenges ahead. Friday, April 11, at 4 p.m. ET at Carleton University, 1811 Dunton Tower, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details: carleton.ca.

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.

TUESDAY, APRIL 22

Rose LeMay's Book Launch—*The Hill Times*' columnist Rose LeMay will discuss her new book, *Ally is a Verb: A Guide to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*, at a private book launch hosted by Deloitte and Catalyst Canada. Space is limited. Tuesday, April 22, at 4:30 p.m. at Deloitte Greenhouse, Bayview Yards Innovation Centre, Suite E200, 7 Bayview Station Rd. Register via Eventbrite.

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.

THE HILL TIMES CLASSIFIEDS

Information and advertisement placement:
613-688-8821
classifieds@hilltimes.com

HOUSE FOR SALE



GATINEAU RIVERFRONT!

Gorgeous high quality custom built 2540 sq ft five bedroom waterfront home with views down the river. Post and Beam accents, two wood burning fireplaces and three electric. High windows invite the sunlight, walk-out basement with wood elevator. Screened porch, shallow sandy beach and miles of boating with excellent fishing at your door. 2.5 acre flat lot is great for games of all kinds. Riverfront fire pit, hot tub and open decks. Close to the Trans Canada Trail. 15 minutes from Wakefield Village. \$1,290,000
Danny Sivyer Remax Direct 613-769-4884
dannyremax.wakefield@gmail.com



FROM
TRADE WAR
TO
CAMPAIGN
TRAIL

**Independent Journalism
Keeps Democracy Healthy.**

Subscribe to *The Hill Times*.

