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# THE HILL TIMES

**Exclusive opinion: inside**

THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR, NO. 2211

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2025 \$5.00

**NEWS**

**Real chance of global recession due to U.S. trade war, say economists**

BY **JESSE CNOCKAERT**

Economists have warned that Canada must brace for the possibility of a global recession as a consequence of trade policy under United States President Donald Trump, which escalated last week with his announcement of sweeping tariffs against dozens of countries.

"[Trump's tariffs are] going to mess up the U.S. economy in a bad way. That affects us, and then it affects other countries in the world, which affects us," said Stephen Williamson, a professor of economics at Western University. "The effects on world trade and other economies in the world—that comes home to Canada."

On April 2, Trump announced his long-awaited world tariff package, which included taxes on nearly every import going into the U.S. A baseline of 10-per-cent tariffs was set, with higher levies for the European Union with 20 per cent, and countries including China with 35 per cent, Vietnam with 46 per cent, Taiwan with 32 per cent, and Japan with 24 per cent.

Canada and Mexico were not listed among the nations slapped with "reciprocal" tariffs, but levies previously announced by Trump remain in place, including those on steel, aluminum, and goods that aren't compliant with the existing Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). A 25-per-cent U.S. tariff on all foreign-made automobiles also took effect on April 3.

"The U.S. is such a big economy in the world. They're so rich that if the U.S. takes a big hit, it's going to affect the whole world, along with all this retaliation. You're going to have everybody retaliating against the U.S. and imposing these extra tariff barriers with the U.S. That's bad news," he said.

Canada's best response is also difficult to say, according to Williamson, in part because it is unclear how long the trade war will go on.

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**NEWS**

## Poillievre needs to 'bomb the bridge' of Mark Carney's credibility to win: political players

It's one of the most consequential elections in Canadian history, as the nation faces down U.S. President Donald Trump. The Liberals had been trailing the Conservatives by 25 points for almost two years up until January. Now, they're leading by 14 points, a dramatic 39-point swing in just two months under a new, untested political leader. It could come down to the wire with three weeks left in the campaign. **See story, by Abbas Rana on p. 16.**



**It's getting nasty:** To break the Liberals' momentum under Mark Carney, right, Pierre Poillievre's Conservatives will have to 'bomb the bridge' of the prime ministers' credibility, says pollster Greg Lyle. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

**Most recent national polls, released last week**

Party	338canada.com (April 1)	Nanos (April 1)	Abacus Data (March 31)	Léger (March 29)	Angus Reid (March 30)	Ekos (March 28)	Seat Projections by 338canada.com (April 2)
LPC	43%	46%	39%	44%	46%	48%	193 [167-222]
CPC	38%	37%	39%	38%	38%	36%	125 [99-148]
NDP	8%	9%	11%	6%	7%	6%	17 [7-25]
Bloc	2%	6%	5%	5%	7%	5%	7 [1-14]

**NEWS**

**Trump-led U.S. an 'unreliable partner' for Canada, says expert group: 'we're dealing with an administration that doesn't believe our country has a right to exist'**

BY **CHRISTOPHER GULY**

Former federal Progressive Conservative cabinet minister Perrin Beatty says he had planned to spend Easter with his wife, Julie, at the condominium they have owned for about 12 years in Naples, Florida. But he decided to return last week to Ottawa after United States President Donald Trump announced his "Liberation Day" reciprocal tariffs on April 2.

"We're dealing with an administration that doesn't believe that our country has a right to exist," said Beatty before departing his winter home in a country whose president has repeatedly pushed the idea of annexing Canada as its 51st state.

The sentiments from the former minister in the governments of former prime ministers Joe Clark, Brian Mulroney, and Kim Campbell toward the U.S. under Trump are expanded in a report entitled *Broken Trust: Managing an Unreliable Ally* released on April 1 by the Expert Group on Canada-U.S. Relations, which Beatty co-chairs.

Under Trump's presidency, our neighbour to the south "has become an unreliable partner—to the point of hostility," reads the report.

"International relationships with the United States are no longer the product of collaboration and agreement but of the whims of one man," who "rejects ... moral constraints."

Through various binational initiatives—from NORAD to trade agreements—Canada and the U.S. "understood that

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# Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

## Philpott, Maher, Talaga, Blake and Roberts shortlisted for Shaughnessy Cohen Prize



Five of the best Canadian political books of the year: Stephen Maher's *The Prince*; Tanya Talaga's *The Knowing*; Raymond B. Blake's *Canada's Prime Ministers and the Shaping of a National Identity*; Jane Philpott's *Health for All*; and Alisdair Roberts' *The Adaptable Country* are shortlisted for the 2025 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize. Book covers courtesy of UBC Press, Simon & Schuster Canada, Penguin Random House Canada, McGill-Queen's University Press, and Harper Collins Canada

Former Liberal cabinet minister **Jane Philpott**, former Hill journalist **Stephen Maher**, *Globe and Mail* columnist and award-winning author **Tanya Talaga**, Canadian historian **Raymond B. Blake** and U.S.-based professor **Alisdair Roberts** have been shortlisted for this year's Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing, the best political book of the year.

Jury members **Jennifer Ditchburn** (president and CEO of the Institute for Research on Public Policy), **Sara Mojtahedzadeh** (*Globe and Mail* reporter), and **Christopher Waddell** (former director of Carleton University's School of Journalism and Communication) released the shortlist on April 1.

Blake said he's "delighted" and "very humbled to be included 4 distinguished authors" in an April 2 post on X.

Presented by The Writers' Trust of Canada, the annual prize comes with a purse of \$25,000 for the winner, who will be announced at Ottawa's Politics and the Pen gala on Sept. 24.

Each finalist will receive \$2,500. The shortlisted titles are: Blake's *Canada's Prime Ministers and the Shaping of a National Identity*, Maher's *The Prince: The Turbulent Reign of Justin Trudeau*, Philpott's *Health for All: A Doctor's Prescription for a Healthier Canada*, Roberts' *The Adaptable Country: How Canada Can Survive the Twenty-First Century*, and Talaga's *The Knowing*.



Pictured top left and clockwise: Raymond B. Blake, Tanya Talaga, Alisdair Roberts, Stephen Maher, and Jane Philpott are the authors shortlisted for the 2025 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Jake Wright, handout photograph and courtesy of X

## Poillievre's kids 'love' election campaign's excitement

Conservative Leader **Pierre Poillievre** offered a peek into his family's experience on the campaign trail last week in a radio interview with **Ben Mulroney**, son of former prime minister **Brian Mulroney**, who led the country from 1984 to 1993.

"I remember those days of travelling with my family, I remember them entirely fondly," Mulroney said on April 2 in his more than 20-minute long interview with Poillievre. Mulroney recalled how, as an eight-year-old on his father's first federal campaign, he "loved all of it. The staffers became like family, I got to see my dad in the best possible light because it was what he wanted to be doing," said Mulroney, who then asked how the Poillievre children were responding.

"They love it," smiled both Poillievre and his wife **Ana**, seated to his right in the studio. "My little guy, **Cruz**, he loves the excitement, the sound, the noise, and all the adventure. He helps us with little projects. We did a visit to a



Conservative Leader Pierre Poillievre, second right, and his wife Ana, right, joined Ben Mulroney on his self-titled radio show on April 2. Screenshot courtesy of YouTube/Global News

pizza shop the other day, and he helped put the mushrooms on the pizza. I ended up almost dropping the pizza on the ground," he chuckled.

"Our little girl, **Valentina**, she loves motion. She loves to be moving, physically moving all the time, so a campaign tour is actually quite good for

her. Sometimes she gets a little bit overwhelmed by the lights and the sounds, and she has to make her way to a quieter place, but it's been, I think overall—wouldn't you say—a good experience for them" he asks his wife, who noted their toddler son keeps trying to steal his microphone.

## New book on Poillievre to launch at Progress Summit

**Martin Lukacs** will launch his new book about Conservative Leader **Pierre Poillievre** at this week's left-leaning Progress Summit, hosted by the Broadbent Institute in Ottawa.

Titled *The Poillievre Project: A Radical Blueprint for Corporate Rule*, Lukacs—managing editor at *The Breach* media—reveals the playbook behind Poillievre's rise, and "exposes his radical vision for reshaping Canada," according to Breach Books, The Breach's new publishing arm.

"Drawing on investigative research and first-hand reporting, Lukacs reveals how Poillievre has built a political machine with the backing of tech oligarchs, real estate tycoons, oil barons, and Bay Street billionaires—all poised to profit from a Conservative government in Ottawa," reads the blurb.



Martin Lukacs will discuss his new book, *The Poillievre Project*, on April 10 in Ottawa. Cover image courtesy of breachbooks.ca

The book launch is scheduled for April 10 in which the author will chat with PressProgress' publisher **Romy Garrido**.

Lukacs' previous book is *The Trudeau Formula: Seduction and Betrayal in an Age of Discontent*.

## National Observer hires Rachel Gilmore after CTV's Your Morning drops her

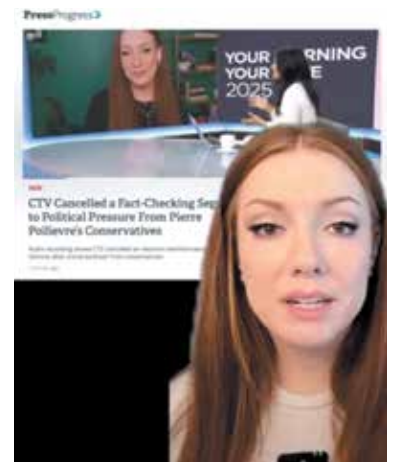
One day after journalist **Rachel Gilmore** took to social media chronicling how CTV cancelled her fact-checking spot due to pressure from online right-wing trolls, *Canada's National Observer* announced it would be hosting the segment starting April 4.

"We're very excited to announce journalists Rachel Gilmore and **Emily Baron Cadloff** are teaming up with *National Observer* staff for a biweekly election fact-checking segment," the independent online paper posted on BlueSky on April 3.

On April 2, Gilmore took to her various social media channels to share her experience in which CTV cancelled the remaining three of four planned on-air hits featuring Gilmore in a segment on its morning show titled "Fact-Check Friday" due to the volume of backlash her appearance caused the broadcaster.

"CTV called me and informed me that I have lost this career opportunity," the longtime political reporter explained in a video on her YouTube channel. "CTV made it extremely clear that this was being cancelled because of the online backlash, not because of my skill set, not because of anything that I have said or done, but because of the way these bad-faith trolls are talking about be online—bad-faith trolls and a member of **Pierre Poillievre's** team."

Gilmore was referring to a March 25 post on X by former opposition leader spokesperson **Sebastian Skamski** calling her a "disgraced disinformation peddler" without providing evidence to his claim. According to an April 1 story in *Press Progress*, Skamski's tweet "inspired a pile-on by far-right influencers and right-wing alternative media outlets," and caused CTV to pause Gilmore's next appearance the following day, and then ultimately



Freelance reporter Rachel Gilmore on YouTube, April 2, 2025. Screenshot courtesy of YouTube

cancel the entire segment a week later.

Gilmore published a recording of the phone call she had with CTV producer **Jennifer MacLean**, in which MacLean acknowledges the "troll base" that bullies Gilmore, "but I really did not realize the extent of the volume of that push back that we had."

Gilmore said she was spotlighting this experience so Canadians understand the power trolls have on press freedom: "This is why I get harassed so badly because they know that it will work. If you see someone reporting on the far-right, on threats to democracy...and you bully everyone who gives them a career opportunity...and then those career opportunities get taken away, you are going to realize that it works."

A Bell Media spokesperson told *Press Progress* that "the decision to not have Ms. Gilmore return to Your Morning was an editorial call made by the show's executive producer."

cleadlay@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times

# Liberals could pick up five to six seats in Alberta, but NDP's bleed in votes could also help Tories, say strategists

BY ABBAS RANA

Alberta has long been a stronghold for the federal Conservative Party, but political insiders say the Liberal Party's rapid surge in the polls over the past two months has put at least five of the province's 37 ridings into play for a potential Mark Carney win in the upcoming election.

In an interview with *The Hill Times*, Stephen Carter, a high-profile political strategist known for several come-from-behind political victories at various levels of government, said the Liberals' recent rise in the polls—along with candidates who have strong name recognition—could mean a few more seats in major urban centres like Calgary and Edmonton.

"Strong candidates and polling," said Carter in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "I would say that there's at least five."

Alberta is the bedrock of the Conservative Party base, which consistently secures the vast majority of seats in the province. A Conservative nominee is often virtually guaranteed a seat in the House of Commons. However, in certain areas of Calgary and Edmonton, left-leaning parties maintain some support. In the 2021 federal election, the Conservatives won 30 of Alberta's 34 ridings, while the Liberals and the NDP each captured two seats. The province now has 37 seats under redistribution.

Incumbent Conservative MPs in Alberta often joke that campaigning in their own ridings might actually cost them votes. Instead, they join the party's secondary tour—following the leader—by travelling to other provinces to support fellow Conservative candidates.

Carter's list of potential Liberal wins include Calgary McKnight, Calgary Confederation, Calgary Centre, Edmonton Centre and Edmonton Southeast.

Incumbent Liberal MP George Chahal is seeking re-election in Calgary McKnight, while political insider and pundit Corey Hogan is running in Calgary Confederation. Former cabinet minister Amarjeet Sohi is contesting the seat in Edmonton Southeast.

Chahal, who was elected in Calgary Skyview in 2021, is running in Calgary McKnight following a redistribution that divided the riding in two, and granted the province three more seats. In the 2015 election, the Liberals secured two seats in Calgary—Calgary Skyview and Calgary Centre—as well as two in Edmonton: Edmonton Centre and Edmonton Mill Woods. In Calgary Confederation, the Liberals narrowly lost to Conservative Len Webber by just two percentage points. Webber, who first won the seat in 2015 with a slim 2.4 per cent margin, announced he would not seek re-election just before the election was called for the current campaign. Hogan is now running in Calgary Confederation, and with the Liberals gaining momentum in the polls, political insiders believe Carney could flip this riding on election day, April 28.

"It had, in 2015, the most votes, the most Liberal votes that have ever been cast in Alberta," said Carter. "So it has a decidedly Liberal tint to it. They just need to run a viable candidate. And Corey Hogan is a very viable candidate."

Sohi, the current mayor of Edmonton and a former Liberal minister in then-prime minister Justin Trudeau's cabinet, is now running in Edmonton Southeast, and it's expected that, barring a major surprise, he will likely win this riding. At dissolution, the Liberals held Edmonton Centre with Randy Boissonnault as the MP. Boissonnault, who was forced to resign from cabinet last in November over his former business dealings and questions about his claims of Indigenous identity, is not seeking re-election. Eleanor Olszewski, chair of the federal Alberta Liberal Party, has been nominated as the party's candidate in Edmonton Centre.

Janet Brown, a well-respected Alberta pollster, told *The Hill Times* that she has shortlisted six ridings where the Liberals could be competitive in the April 28 vote: Calgary Skyview, Calgary McKnight, Calgary Confederation, Calgary Centre, Edmonton Centre, and Edmonton Southeast.

Brown said she's compiled the list based on historical voting patterns in the ridings and recent

polling data. However, she said that two Edmonton-area ridings—Edmonton Strathcona, held by the NDP's Heather McPherson, and Edmonton Griesbach, where NDP Blake Desjarlais is seeking re-election—are currently New Democrat strongholds. In these ridings, potential vote-splitting between the Liberals and NDP could impact the outcome, she said.

One key factor behind the Liberal surge in the polls is the shift of left-leaning voters toward the red party, driven by a desire to block Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre from becoming prime minister. Many of these voters view the Conservative leader as a Canadian counterpart to American President Donald Trump. The Liberals are also benefiting from a "rally-around-the-flag" effect, as voters get behind the incumbent government amid the ongoing trade war with the United States.

Most polling firms are currently reporting momentum on the Liberal side. On the low end, Abacus Data is suggesting a dead heat between the two parties nationally, with the Liberals and Conservatives both tied at 39 per cent, and the NDP at 11 per cent. On the high end, EKOS Research reports a 12-point Liberal lead, placing the Liberals at 48 per cent, Conservatives at 36 per cent, and the NDP at six per cent as of March 31.

"I have no doubt that the NDP candidates running in Edmonton are going to have a hard time hanging on to their vote," said Brown, president of Janet Brown Opinion Research. "It's easy for me to believe that they're bleeding votes in the national trend. But are they bleeding enough votes to lose, and are they bleeding enough votes to lose to the Liberals, because the other scenario is they lose enough votes to the Liberals to allow the Conservatives to [win]."

Brown said that, based on the current polls, a significant chunk of the progressive vote is moving *en masse* to the Liberals to stop the Conservatives, leaving the NDP with very little support. If the vote splitting happens between the Liberals and the NDP, that could help the Conservatives in the upcoming election.

Brown said that Calgary Skyview remains on her list of winnable ridings for the Liberals, as they held the seat before the writ was dropped, and the current momentum behind Carney could boost their chances. The Conservative Party's decision to appoint Amanpreet Gill as their candidate has stirred controversy, sidelining a field of eight to 12 hopefuls who had sought the nomination. Among the disappointed is former Conservative MP Jag Sahota, who represented the riding from 2019 to 2021. In protest, Sahota's father organized a rally in the riding to highlight the party's unfair decision to appoint a candidate without a proper nomination contest.

Minesh Patel, who was seeking the Conservative nomination, is now running as an Independent. Jagdish Anand, a well-respected retina specialist, is also running as an Independent. It remains to be seen how much impact these independent candidates and internal party discord will have on the final outcome.

Alberta Liberal insiders told *The Hill Times* that while the Western province has traditionally been unfriendly territory for the Liberals, this election marks a shift. For

the first time in decades, potential candidates—not only from Calgary and Edmonton, but even from some rural areas—are reaching out to seek Liberal nominations.

"We're not hated as much now," said one Liberal with a laugh, considering that Alberta is a Conservative heartland where it was not unusual to see "Fuck Trudeau" signs on the back of cars until recently.

According to polling aggregator 338Canada, Calgary Centre and Calgary Skyview are currently considered toss-ups between the Liberals and Conservatives. Calgary McKnight leans red, while Calgary Confederation is leaning blue.

In Edmonton, the outlook is more varied: Both Edmonton Centre and Edmonton Southeast are leaning Liberal, Edmonton Griesbach is a

toss-up between the Conservatives and NDP, and Edmonton Strathcona is likely to remain with the NDP.

Based on the polling aggregators' national seat projections, if the current polling trends do not change until election day, the NDP could even lose its official party status in the House of Commons. Polling aggregator 338Canada projects that, based on the current numbers, the Liberals could win 191 seats, the Conservatives 126, the Bloc 18, the NDP seven, and the Greens one. The range of possible outcomes shows the Liberals winning anywhere between 164 and 220 seats, while the Conservatives could secure between 101 and 150. For the Bloc Québécois, the range is nine to 27 seats; for the NDP, one to 13 seats; and for the Greens, none to two seats.

## 2021 Results in Alberta, Transposed onto New Riding Boundaries

New Riding	Province/Territory	Winning Party	Vote %	Runner-up Party	Winning Margin
Airdrie—Cochrane	Alberta	Conservative	59.90%	NDP	44.97
Battle River—Crowfoot	Alberta	Conservative	71.38%	NDP	61.68
Bow River	Alberta	Conservative	69.57%	PPC	59.72
Calgary Centre	Alberta	Conservative	50.92%	Liberal	20.85
Calgary Confederation	Alberta	Conservative	45.69%	Liberal	17.80
Calgary Crowfoot	Alberta	Conservative	54.94%	Liberal	33.25
Calgary East	Alberta	Conservative	52.86%	Liberal	34.32
Calgary Heritage	Alberta	Conservative	58.32%	NDP	41.05
Calgary McKnight	Alberta	Liberal	43.76%	Conservative	9.54
Calgary Midnapore	Alberta	Conservative	60.27%	NDP	41.73
Calgary Nose Hill	Alberta	Conservative	55.32%	Liberal	35.09
Calgary Shepard	Alberta	Conservative	61.20%	NDP	45.17
Calgary Signal Hill	Alberta	Conservative	59.81%	Liberal	40.43
Calgary Skyview	Alberta	Conservative	44.96%	Liberal	11.84
Edmonton Centre	Alberta	Conservative	32.60%	Liberal	1.39
Edmonton Gateway	Alberta	Conservative	43.12%	Liberal	17.70
Edmonton Griesbach	Alberta	NDP	40.36%	Conservative	4.05
Edmonton Manning	Alberta	Conservative	41.12%	NDP	10.11
Edmonton Northwest	Alberta	Conservative	43.10%	NDP	15.47
Edmonton Riverbend	Alberta	Conservative	45.44%	Liberal	20.51
Edmonton Southeast	Alberta	Conservative	37.70%	Liberal	3.70
Edmonton Strathcona	Alberta	NDP	57.95%	Conservative	31.18
Edmonton West	Alberta	Conservative	45.62%	NDP	21.10
Foothills	Alberta	Conservative	68.43%	NDP	57.03
Fort McMurray—Cold Lake	Alberta	Conservative	67.81%	PPC	55.11
Grande Prairie	Alberta	Conservative	68.96%	NDP	57.11
Lakeland	Alberta	Conservative	69.40%	PPC	58.34
Leduc—Wetaskiwin	Alberta	Conservative	63.37%	NDP	45.77
Lethbridge	Alberta	Conservative	55.65%	NDP	36.34
Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner	Alberta	Conservative	65.80%	NDP	51.90
Parkland	Alberta	Conservative	63.09%	NDP	46.81
Peace River—Westlock	Alberta	Conservative	62.65%	NDP	49.49
Ponoka—Didsbury	Alberta	Conservative	67.87%	PPC	54.52
Red Deer	Alberta	Conservative	60.51%	NDP	43.15
Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan	Alberta	Conservative	57.55%	NDP	36.91
St. Albert—Sturgeon River	Alberta	Conservative	56.03%	NDP	32.48
Yellowhead	Alberta	Conservative	60.23%	NDP	45.57

Source: Elections Canada

# Pharma, tech giants complained of Canada's drug pricing system, digital service tax to U.S. trade rep

The board that oversees medicine prices in Canada and levies on big social media and online service platforms appear in submissions to the U.S. Trade Representatives review of 'unfair' foreign trading practices.

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

In the weeks leading up to United States President Donald Trump's imposition of so-called "reciprocal" tariffs on much of the world, American tech and pharmaceutical giants lobbied their government to take action against Canada's digital services tax and drug-pricing board.

Trump announced plans on April 2 to impose what he called "reciprocal" tariffs on goods from most other countries, with a baseline of at least 10 per cent. The supposed retaliation was in many cases not due to other countries' tariffs at all, but rather internal taxation systems, food and safety regulations, or simple trade imbalances in which the U.S. purchased more from a country than it sold.

The measures were foreshadowed in a Jan. 24 memo from the Office of the United States Trade Representative, announcing a review of "foreign trade practices to account for those practices which may be unfair to the United States, including those practices that may be unreasonable or discriminatory and that may burden or restrict United States commerce."

In a public comment period from Feb. 20-March 11, the office received more than 760 submissions, including from industry associations from the tech and pharmaceutical sectors that outlined grievances with Canada.

## PMPRB in pharma spotlight

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America



In the weeks before U.S. President Donald Trump slapped tariffs on goods from almost every other country, his trade representative sought feedback on 'unfair' trade practices in Canada affecting American firms. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

(PhRMA)—which counts Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, Bayer, and Merck among its members—took aim at Canada's Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB) in its March 11 submission, among other concerns with the country.

The PMPRB reports on pricing trends in the pharmaceutical industry, and sets maximum prices within Canada for new patented medicines. PhRMA argued that the second function "systematically devalues U.S. medicines" through its practice of examining the prices of drugs across a "basket" of 11 countries: Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

That "deeply flawed approach," the submission said, is compounded by PMPRB's removal of the U.S. and Switzerland from its basket in 2022, and the addition of "six countries with lower drug prices and more onerous price controls." PhRMA made similar complaints against counterpart agencies in Australia, Japan, and the European Union, of which some member countries are included in PMPRB's basket of comparator nations.

In its submission, PhRMA said that Canada should reform the PMPRB's role to "reflect the spirit of the" Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) principles included in Article 29.6.

That article covers the importance of "pharmaceutical prod-

ucts and medical devices," and to recognize the "value of pharmaceutical products and medical devices through the operation of competitive markets," or adopting procedures that "appropriately value the objectively demonstrated therapeutic significance" of those products.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Exporters Alliance argued for tariff exemptions for "high quality, [Food and Drug Administration]-approved medicines from Canadian pharmaceutical facilities," without which the U.S. market would "surely experience shortages, increased costs and supply chain disruption."

## C-11, C-18, Digital Services Tax targeted

The communication and technology lobby group Computer and Communications Industry Association (CCIA) attacked the effects of Canada's Online News Act on member companies Meta and Google, in addition to criticizing the impacts of the Online Streaming Act, and the Digital Service Tax on U.S. firms.

The Online News Act compels tech enterprises to enter agreements with Canadian news publishers to pay for content posted on their platforms. Under the criteria, only Google and Meta—parent company of Facebook and Instagram—are required to pay.

The two companies took different approaches to the law. Google sought and achieved a

five-year exemption from the law by agreeing to pay publishers \$100-million annually. Meta banned news on its platforms in an attempt to avoid payments.

CCIA's submission does not mention either Meta or Google by name, only noting that they are U.S. firms. In Meta's case of banning news to avoid paying publishers, the association said "the economic effect on the supplier of withdrawing from this market segment is difficult to estimate."

"U.S. companies face ongoing threats of potentially greater payments if current agreements are deemed insufficient," the submission said.

The Online Streaming Act—which requires streaming content providers to fund and promote Canadian content—was also listed among examples of a "pervasive and growing phenomenon ... forcing one set of market participants to subsidize the economic activities of another."

One of two appendices added to the submission was a May 2024 paper on the impacts of the Digital Service Tax on the U.S., which concluded that the three-per-cent tax on revenues from online marketplaces, advertising, social media, and user-data services would cost American firms between \$US0.9-billion (\$1.29-billion) and \$US2.3-billion (\$3.3-billion) and between 1,200 and 3,140 full-time equivalent American jobs.

The paper also alleged that thresholds were "gerrymandered" to target U.S. digital service

providers while excluding most Canadian counterparts.

U.S. government concern over the digital service tax and the Online Streaming Act predates the Trump administration, appearing in the 2024 *National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers* under then-president Joe Biden.

The tax reappears in U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer's 2025 report on foreign trade barriers for Canada, released on March 31, alongside existing complaints about supply management, alcohol, and restrictions on seed exports.

This year's version also included concerns about the Online News Act, noting that the "United States continues to monitor this issue." Greer also takes issue with Canada's plan to achieve zero plastic waste by 2030, Quebec's latest French language law, and apparent "separate and unequal points of access to the Alberta energy market for Montana energy producers."

## No 'unfair trading practices' from Canada, says business council

Canada's government and businesses also had their say in separate submissions to Greer's office on March 11.

The federal government's submission, with a letterhead from the country's embassy in Washington, D.C., argued that trade between the two countries is "fair, balanced and reciprocal."

"Canada is committed to promoting fair trade and countering unfair and non-reciprocal trade practices by other countries to facilitate innovation, competitiveness and prosperity in North America," the submission said. "However, Canada's ability to take action to combat unfair trade practices from other countries is constrained when faced with unjust and unwarranted trade measures from the United States."

The submission also defended the digital service tax as a country-neutral levy on large firms that "earn revenues from in-scope digital services associated with Canadian users." The government's submission also noted that the U.S. had a trade surplus for services with Canada, and that Canadians were the top source of tourism to the United States.

The Business Council of Canada (BCC) also made a submission on March 11. BCC president and CEO Goldy Hyder said Canada does not have any "unfair trading practices" that caused harm to the U.S., and that any issues over non-reciprocal trade arrangements should be processed via the forthcoming review of CUSMA.

"In the interim, we would merely submit that the operation of the USMCA since its coming into force under President Trump has, as set out in the America First Trade Policy, achieved and maintained 'the general level of reciprocal and mutually advantageous concessions with respect to free trade agreement partner countries,'" Hyder concluded.

sjeffery@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times

# Real chance of global recession due to U.S. trade war, say economists

U.S. President Donald Trump is ‘playing with matches and gasoline when it comes to trade wars,’ according to Fen Hampson, professor of international affairs with Carleton University.

Continued from page 1

“There should be income support for people who are thrown out of work because of this tariff war. The other thing is the retaliation. You want to make it clear that you’re going to play tough. You hope that they, the Americans, think rationally and then figure this out and eventually back down. But who knows?” he said.

“There’s always uncertainty involved ... but retaliation should be there that seems appropriate to get this to go away, and then Canada just has to be looking for other trading partners.”

Trump’s April 2 announcements represented “the biggest break in America’s trade policy in over a century—and committed the most profound, harmful and unnecessary economic error in the modern era,” according to an article published by *The Economist* on April 3.

Williamson said that interpretation is “not overblown.”

He said the current trade situation reminds him of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, a law signed in 1930 that implemented protectionist trade policies in America. The act raised U.S. tariffs on more than 20,000 imported goods, and kicked off a global trade war. Williamson said that it’s generally agreed that the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act contributed to the Great Depression.

Fen Hampson, Chancellor’s professor and professor of international affairs with Carleton University, told *The Hill Times* there’s a real risk of a global recession.

“It’s not just the tariffs you have to worry about, but it’s the impact on investment, on global trade, on the global financial market. If we’re driven into a deep recession, all bets are off in terms of how this is going to impact us and the rest of the world,” he said.

Hampson said “we’ve seen this movie before,” and also likened



Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured April 2, 2025, on the way into the Cabinet Committee on Canada-U.S. Relations and National Security on Parliament Hill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

the current situation to the implementation of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act.

“Those were 20-per-cent tariffs, but what most people forget was they came on top of 40-per-cent tariffs that the United States put on its trading partners in the early 1920s to protect its automobile industry and agricultural sector. History suggests that Donald Trump is playing with matches and gasoline when it comes to trade wars,” he said.

For Canada, Hampson said the most exposed sectors remain heavy industry, steel, aluminum and automobiles.

“It’s going to be—certainly in that sector, I would say—carnage in the sense that there will be major plant layoffs, shutdowns, and that’s going to ricochet throughout the North American industry. It’s not just us ... it’s also Americans and Mexicans,” he said.

Gaphel Kongtsa, director of international policy at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, told *The Hill Times* that, although Canada is not among the countries on Trump’s list on April 2, that “we’re not out of the woods yet.”

“The wider set of tariffs that we face are still coming, so tariffs on steel and aluminum, [and] autos ... these are all in effect. I think, today, what’s notable is that we just seem to have avoided a new batch of tariffs that many other countries are facing. In a way, positive news, but Canada is not in the clear yet,” he said.

Kongtsa said he believes that Trump’s tariffs could potentially push Canada into a recession.

“Our understanding was that a blanket 25-per-cent tariff ... could have pushed Canada into a recession by the middle of this



Carleton University’s Fen Hampson says, ‘It’s not just the tariffs you have to worry about.’ Photograph courtesy of Carleton University

year. Since then, there have been a number of delays and exemptions, and new tariffs that have been added to the mix, so it’s hard to say with certainty exactly what the outcomes will be in the coming months because things are changing so rapidly,” he said.

To navigate the crisis, Kongtsa said the federal government should keep all options open in their response to the U.S.

“It’s important that the government of Canada collaborate with provincial partners, and also maintain a posture of having all potential options—including retaliatory tariffs—in consideration,” he said. “We’re not in the clear just yet, and it’s important that the government be prepared to take further action should we be in a position where we need to respond again.”

David Adams, president and CEO of Global Automakers of Canada, told *The Hill Times* that Trump’s auto tariffs are a con-

cern, but he also doesn’t expect automakers to make any “rash decisions.”

“There’s billions of dollars that have been invested. Despite being very concerned, I think automakers will be taking a considered view of this,” he said.

“I think everybody is going to let the dust settle a little bit. I think there’s a view that any type of threat that would come with the tariffs is going to expire, ultimately, after four years, presumably. Maybe that’s a rash assumption, but these are huge capital investments, and decisions to do anything different about those investments isn’t going to be taken lightly.”

Prime Minister Mark Carney responded to Trump’s tariff announcement in a video posted on X on April 2, in which he said Canada is going to “fight these tariffs with countermeasures.”

“We are going to protect our workers and we are going to build the strongest economy in the G7. In a crisis, it’s important to come together and it’s essential to act with purpose and with force, and that’s what we will do,” he said in the video.

Carney retaliated on April 3 with a 25-per-cent counter-tariff on U.S.-made cars, but which will not affect vehicles and auto parts compliant with CUSMA.

In a video clip posted to his X account on April 2, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre said the U.S. is betraying its closest friend, and attacking Canada’s economy. Poilievre said in the clip that, in addition to unfair and counter-productive tariffs on this country’s aluminum and steel, Trump is now going after autoworkers.

“We must be an economic fortress that can defend itself, that can stand up for its own people,

and put Canada first,” said Poilievre in the video. “Conservatives will be there for the autoworkers, to keep them working, to keep their jobs, to fight through this mess. We will push hard to put an end to these tariffs and get a quick but fair deal that protects our sovereignty, knocks down all the tariffs and allows us to rebuild our military so that we can be a true sovereign nation.”

On April 3, Poilievre also announced the Conservatives would repeal GST on Canadian-made vehicles.

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh announced on the same day that a government led by him would issue “Canada Victory Bonds” in response to the trade war. The plan would see the federal government offer five- and 10-year bonds that Canadians could buy either through a payroll deduction, or over the counter.

Catherine Cobden, president and CEO of the Canadian Steel Producers Association (CSPA), said that Trump’s trade agenda has eroded the decades-long, mutually beneficial trading relationship between Canada and America, in a CSPA press release on April 3.

Canadian steel continues to face “unwarranted and deeply damaging” 25-per-cent tariffs which the U.S. imposed on March 12, along with “equally damaging tariffs” on this country’s aluminum, automobiles, auto parts, “and likely more to come,” according to the press release.

“To reduce our dependency, the Canadian steel industry urgently requires the adoption of strict border measures that address unfair steel trade in Canada and helps to recapture the Canadian market for our industry, our workers and our communities,” said Cobden in the press release. “We call on the Canadian government, and all political parties, to support the immediate adoption of these border measures.”

Unifor national president Lana Payne argued that, although Trump did not include Canada in the sweeping reciprocal tariffs, the April 2 announcement offered no relief to Canadian workers.

The Unifor press release pointed out that previously announced tariffs on non-CUSMA compliant Canadian-made vehicles came into effect on April 3, and argued the U.S. will continue its existing 25-per-cent tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum as well as other tariffs on this country’s exports, including softwood lumber, with threatened tariffs on pharmaceuticals, copper, semiconductors, wood products and others expected to come into force in the future.

“Trump is gaslighting us, wanting us to be grateful for not having reciprocal tariffs imposed on Canada while he tries to pick off our domestic industries one by one. We won’t fall for it,” said Payne in the press release. “The reality is that this trade war is just getting started and Canada is still feeling the pain of U.S. trade penalties disproportionately worse than any country in the world.”

[jcnockaert@hilltimes.com](mailto:jcnockaert@hilltimes.com)  
*The Hill Times*

# Canada needs a national strategy for security, trade, and economy to contend with Trump, say political science experts

'A royal commission on securing Canada's future is not optional. It is essential,' reads a March 24 open letter to the prime minister, signed by almost 100 experts in political science and other fields.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Securing Canada's future in the face of the administration of United States President Donald Trump requires a national strategy that encompasses trade, security, and long-term economic thinking, say political science professors and other academics who argue this country is facing its greatest challenge in decades.

"I think we need—once we have a new government—to launch commissions or a national discussion about both economic policy and national security," said Daniel Béland, a McGill University political science professor and director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada.

"Trade is just one piece of the puzzle. We need to rethink our economic strategy, and I think both the main parties—the Conservatives [and] the Liberals—they both recognize that we need to increase our productivity, that we need to, of course, eliminate internal trade barriers."

Béland told *The Hill Times* that, in response to the Trump administration, Canada will need to emphasize east-to-west trade corridors, and will also need to rethink its "fiscal and economic policies, innovation policy, the knowledge economy, [and] internal trade," as part of a broader strategy.

Trump represents a "seismic shift" for the world, and requires a national policy "that aligns with the realities of the 21st century," according to an open letter released on March 24, authored by Jörg Broschek, a political science professor at Wilfrid Laurier University; Erick Duchesne, chair of Université Laval's Political Science Department; Blayne Haggart, associate professor of political science at Brock University; and Patrick Leblond, associate professor and holder of the CN-Paul M. Tellier Chair on



Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured at his campaign office on March 29, 2025, told reporters on March 25 that he has a responsibility to plan for the worst, and that 'part of that response is to be more and more Canadian in our defence capabilities.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Business and Public Policy with the University of Ottawa.

The letter, signed by Béland and 97 others representing fields including political science, economics, and law, urges Canada's next prime minister to call for a royal commission to "forge a bold new socioeconomic model."

"First, a royal commission needs to envision a new policy architecture that aligns all major sectors in [a] way that protects us effectively from geopolitical and climate-related threats. Second, it must forge bold proposals to overhaul our governance architecture, ensuring effective and legitimate co-ordination and collaboration among all stakeholders," reads the letter. "A royal commission on securing Canada's future is not optional. It is essential."

Besides trade and the economy, the other major strategic pillar is national security, according to Béland.

"Canada needs to catch up in terms of military spending," he said. "It also needs, I think, to reinforce its security ties with European partners, in part because—again—it's really hard to fully trust the Trump administration in many areas."

Nikolas Barry-Shaw, trade and privatization campaigner for the Council of Canadians, told *The Hill Times* that Canada definitely needs a national plan.

"It took a while for our political leadership to catch on, but I think once the intransigence and the belligerence of Trump became obvious, and once ... the reaction of the Canadian people



McGill University professor Daniel Béland says Canada needs 'to reinforce its security ties with European partners, in part because ... it's really hard to fully trust the Trump administration.' *Photograph courtesy of Daniel Béland*



The Council of Canadians' Nikolas Barry-Shaw says, 'One thing we should be thankful for in this crisis is the opportunity to rethink the economic development model that we've adopted.' *Photograph courtesy of Eagleclaw Thom*

overwhelmingly rejecting those threats, and making it clear over time that they were ready to resist by any means available, that forced a change of discourse and a change of stance," he said. "One thing we should be thankful for in this crisis is the opportunity to rethink the economic development model that we've adopted."

Barry-Shaw argued that Canada should consider implementing a public sector-led development model and building out the economic sectors needed for the transition away from fossil fuels, as well as building out public sector alternatives for telecommunications so that Canadians don't need to rely on a U.S. firm

like Starlink Services, a wholly-owned subsidiary of American space technology company SpaceX.

He also said a social protection strategy is needed for Canada's employment insurance system to ensure that workers affected by the current trade war are covered.

"This is something that, again, goes back to the 1990s when we basically decimated our employment insurance system, and now we have just a small fraction of unemployed workers who ultimately qualify for benefits. That has to change," he said.

"They have to make some emergency changes to that program so that workers can

continue to put food on the table if they're affected by these tariffs. It's going to hit a lot of people, even in industries that aren't directly export-oriented, but by people who happen to live in the town where the aluminum plant shuts down, and you're a secretary or you're a waitress, and you're out of a job."

David Pratt, a former defence minister in the Paul Martin Liberal government and current principal of David Pratt & Associates, said there's no question that dealing with Trump would require a national strategy, and a lot of "fortitude and determination" to carry it through. He said Ottawa is, so far, on the right track.

"They've put together a support package for affected industries, which I think is absolutely critical. They've attempted to explain to senior U.S. administration officials how damaging these tariffs are going to be, not just for the Canadian economy, but for the U.S. economy as well," he said. "They've been lobbying members of Congress, the Senate and the House of Representatives, which I think is absolutely critical."

When asked about the importance of Canadian unity as part of a national strategy, Pratt said there is tremendous unity, at least in terms of the Canadian people.

"The Trump situation has prompted a groundswell of patriotism and flag waving and a desire to protect our interests and values as a country," he said.

When it comes to unity among the provinces and territories, Pratt cited recent efforts to remove interprovincial trade barriers as a positive step.

In response to escalating trade tensions, the premiers agreed to reduce barriers to internal trade and labour mobility across the country, allowing goods, services, and workers to move more freely, according to a first ministers' statement released on March 5. Ontario Premier Doug Ford told reporters that legislation to address internal trade barriers would be among his first order of business when the province's legislature resumes this month, as reported by CBC News on March 27.

"As far as the provinces are concerned, we've seen a willingness to eliminate trade barriers between the provinces, which I think is, again, absolutely long overdue in the first place, but absolutely welcome, I think, by so many professionals who will be able to work across the country without having an accreditation questioned," Pratt said. "Do we have absolute unanimity across the provincial premiers? No, unfortunately."

Pratt calls Alberta Premier Danielle Smith an outlier.

"I'm not sure that she's properly reading the mood of the population at all here, and seems to be determined to protect Alberta's interests at all costs, and rest of the country be damned as far as she's concerned," he said.

Smith has faced criticism in recent weeks following a March 8 interview with right-wing media outlet Breitbart News. During the interview, the premier said



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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  
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# Editorial

## Editorial

# Dumped candidates raise questions about party vetting

Parties should have spent the second week of the election campaign firming up the last candidates for ridings across the country. Instead, the Liberals have an extra hole to fill, while the Conservatives have lost a whopping four faces from their team.

For the Liberals, the decision to dump Paul Chiang from the party's ticket in Markham—Unionville, Ont., was made by the candidate himself, just hours after leader Mark Carney backed the one-term MP.

The new Liberal leader's decision to back Chiang after audio resurfaced of the former candidate suggesting—possibly jokingly—that people turn a Conservative candidate in to the Chinese consulate to collect a bounty was a terrible misstep.

It resembled one of the worst aspects of the Liberal government under Justin Trudeau, in which misdeeds would go unpunished until it was far too late. Carney, trying to break from memories of the now-unpopular former leader, could have made a clean break by dumping Chiang at the first opportunity.

It's a lesson the Conservatives did not need to learn, albeit when dumping four candidates last week.

Rather than letting three candidates fall on their swords for nasty and—in cold, electoral calculus—politically unviable behaviour, the Conservatives dropped them. Those three were Windsor-Tecumseh-Lakeshore, Ont., candidate Mark McKenzie, who joked in a 2022 podcast

that Trudeau should be executed; Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que., candidate Stefan Marquis, who called his own province “a disgrace” and promoted far-right conspiracy theories in social media posts; and Etobicoke North, Ont., candidate Don Patel, who's alleged to have supported a social media comment calling for Canadian residents to be deported to India. The fourth candidate, Lourence Singh, was dumped as the party's candidate for New Westminster-Burnaby-Maillardville, B.C., but no reason has yet been publicly given.

These decisions to dump candidates raise serious questions about the vetting processes of the two parties that are most likely to form government after April 28. In McKenzie's case, the offending behaviour was two years old, while it's unlikely Marquis' conspiratorial views sprung up at the campaign's outset.

As for Chiang, the Liberals' contention that Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre was not taking the threat of foreign interference seriously has come back to bite them—hard.

You can typically expect some candidates to be dropped during an election campaign. But this time around, the Liberals and Conservatives have pitched the poll as being one of the most important in a generation. Such sloppy vetting and careless nomination processes do not inspire confidence in either party to show the seriousness required of this moment.

*The Hill Times*

## Letters to the Editor



Image courtesy of Pixabay.com

## Senator Plett incorrect about horse exports: Animal Justice

In his March 24, 2025, op-ed in *The Hill Times*, Conservative Senate Leader Don Plett valiantly defends Canada's live horse export for slaughter industry—a bold move, given that the industry is seen as a national embarrassment to most, with nearly 80 per cent of Canadians of all political stripes supporting its timely end. The Senator alleges that the Liberals' 2021 commitment to ban the export of horses for slaughter overseas was based on “misinformation, exaggeration, and emotional manipulation.”

Plett claims that horses exported for slaughter have “ample room.” This despite countless images captured at Canadian airports showing these horses crammed together in wooden crates as well as evidence given by the horse racing industry and others at parliamentary committee hearings on this issue last year.

He claims that “qualified” attendants are present on these flights. Unlike sport horses, who often travel with multiple staff including veterinarians and travel groomsmen, a single attendant on a flight of 100 or more horses packed into a cargo hold can do little to assist horses who may fall or become injured or stressed during transport. These horses are given no food or water, let alone medical care. Government of Japan records show that these attendants routinely miss injured and collapsed animals, with one particularly egregious incident in January 2024 where the attendant failed to notice that four horses had collapsed and one was already dead from her injuries by the time the plane landed. Two of the other collapsed horses died shortly thereafter.

As someone who has repeatedly witnessed these

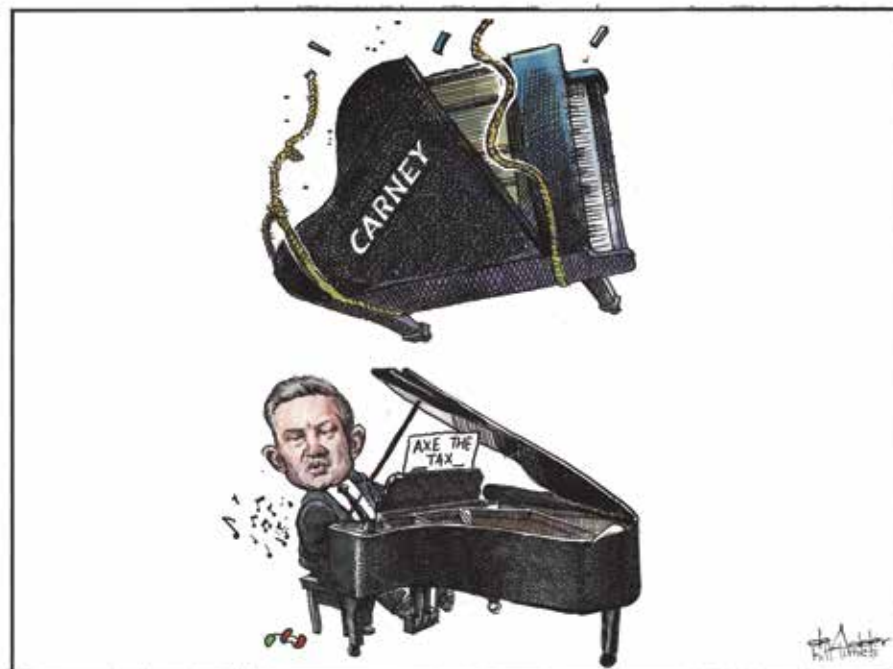
horrific shipments, I can confirm that horses are frequently jabbed with metal prods to get them off the trucks at airport loading docks.

Plett is correct that virtually no deaths of horses during transport have been “reported to the CFIA” but that is because exporters have failed to report them. Government of Japan data from June 2023–June 2024 alone shows that although no deaths or injuries were reported to the CFIA during this time, at least 22 horses died during or shortly after transport and more than 60 others suffered serious injuries and illness.

And as for the claim that this is a “lucrative” industry? The horse export for slaughter industry is worth approximately \$20-million per year. The truth is that horses are worth more alive than dead to the Canadian economy, with the equine industry in our country estimated to be worth more than \$19-billion, supporting Canadians jobs and impacting sectors including agriculture, tourism, entertainment, and recreation/leisure.

The Senator urges us all to “defend our people” rather than defending horses from this cruel and shameful practice, as if the two were somehow at odds. Plett may disagree with the animal protection advocates, veterinary experts, celebrities, and compassionate Canadians who urgently want to see this practice end, he would do well to heed the words of former U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan: “Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts.”

**Kaitlyn Mitchell**  
 Director of legal advocacy,  
 Animal Justice  
 Toronto, Ont.





# Women are flocking to the Liberals in this election

The Liberal leader is leading in all demographic groups except for men aged 35 to 54.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—Women are stampeding to the Liberals in this election.

The most recent Ipsos Reid poll showed that, for women over the age of 55, Prime Minister Mark Carney holds a 27-point lead over Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre.

The Liberal leader is leading in all demographic groups except for men aged 35 to 54.

But the startling gap between women and men is worth examining.

Poilievre didn't help himself last week when he launched his housing strategy claiming that women's biological clock would run out before a Liberal housing program would help.

"I don't think any woman wants to hear Pierre Poilievre talking about their body, period!" was the immediate retort from New Democratic Party Leader Jagmeet Singh.

Critics on social media questioned why Poilievre plans to cancel national childcare if he is so interested in women having babies.

The social gains introduced by the Liberals over the last decade are particularly important for women.

Obviously, childcare is huge, and the dental care program is especially important for older women on fixed incomes who cannot afford dental work. Ditto for school lunch programs and pharmacare, including free birth control, IUDs, hormonal implants, and the morning-after pill.

Poilievre is definitely not on board with national childcare, and has been ambiguous about dental and pharmacare. He has promised that no person currently covered under those programs would be cut off, but is silent on the extension of the programs to others. He also voted against the National School Food Program, and is silent on its continuation.

These are issues of particular interest to women.

It is not lost on them that several dozen members of the Con-



Prime Minister Mark Carney visits the campaign office in his home riding of Nepean, Ont., on March 29, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

servative caucus have pledged to support limitations on abortion through private members' bills. Poilievre himself, in his very first speech to Parliament, spoke out in opposition to public health funding for transgender medical services.

The Trump Supreme Court nominations that resulted in an end to reproductive choice in the United States, and the United States president decision

to abolish equal rights policies for women, minorities, gays, and transsexuals has frightened Canadian women, as well. If it could happen there, what about us? Poilievre doesn't pass that smell test.

Carney leads dramatically in net-positive favourability. That sum is the number achieved when you deduct unfavourable from the favourable viewpoints to discover what people think about each candidate.

Carney is enjoying a positive favourability among men and women. With men, the net range is 18-plus while for women it is 26-plus, according to the same poll.

The difference between Carney's favourability rating and Poilievre's unfavourable is stunning. Three in five women—at 61 per cent—say they have an unfavourable view of Poilievre.

Carney has also managed to attract the majority of young voters, a crucial element in Justin Trudeau's 2015 majority government victory.

Forty-five per cent of young men between the ages of 18 and 34 now support the Liberals, and 46 per cent of men over 54 years old support the Liberals.

We are almost four weeks away from the vote, and the leaders' debates could both have an effect on the outcome.

Poilievre has been cautioned publicly by members of his own party that he needs to pivot away from the anti-Liberal message to an anti-Trump stance.

But the challenge for the Conservative leader is that a signifi-

cant percentage of his base also supports Trump. So if he is too tough on the American president, he will lose supporters, as well.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, who is busy courting Trumpian podcasters and running her own "Trash Canada" campaign, is stoking the flames of separation in Alberta, which is decidedly unhelpful to her federal leader.

Poilievre not only has had to pivot on message that Canada is broken, he also has to attack Trump. The "lost Liberal decade" phrase, which peppers all his public declarations, seems to reinforce the notion that Canada is broken, even while his Bring it Home/Canada First mantra sounds like a page out of the Trump playbook.

Of course, Trump's chaotic approach to government is ensuring that his prints are all over this Canadian election.

His ill-advised Liberation Day announcement of worldwide tariffs on April 2 has certainly caught everyone's attention. Even if the American Senate is successful in reversing the emergency resolution that allowed the president to impose tariffs, it is going to take time for this to happen.

Financial markets and ordinary citizens in the United States are already very nervous about the cost of these tariffs.

But Trump's tenure is four years, and Poilievre only has three weeks.

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

# Controlling the campaign message

One of the more interesting battles that occur during elections is the one between politicians and journalists over who is going to control the message. The battle lines in this conflict are clear.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKAVILLE, ONT.—One of the more interesting battles that occur during elections is the one between politicians and journalists over who is going to control the message.

The battle lines in this conflict are clear.

On the one hand, you have journalists whose goal is to pry "real" answers out of politicians;



NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, top left, Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, bottom left, Liberal Leader Mark Carney and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, centre, Green Co-Leaders Elizabeth May and Jonathan Pedneault, top right, and People's Party Leader Maxime Bernier. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and illustration by Joey Sabourin

on the other, you have politicians whose goal is to stick to their carefully prepared scripts.

It's this dynamic that often leads to tension, i.e., a frustrated reporter at a scrum or at a news conference will complain, "You're not answering my question!"

Of course, politicians don't usually answer questions. In fact, they're trained to use questions to advance their overall message.

I know this because I used to do such training.

The fact is, if you're a media relations person or a communication specialist working on

a political race, your job is to make sure the candidates and the campaign's spokespeople are all pushing the same narrative at every possible opportunity.

This is called message discipline.

A politician who possesses such discipline will only provide answers to journalists that are concise, direct, unambiguous, and which also consistently drive home the campaign's main themes.

The idea is that you want to ensure that whatever clip of your candidate the media ends up

featuring on the nightly news is one that advances your communications agenda.

In other words, the last thing you want is for your candidate to engage in some freewheeling, off-the-top-of-their-head discussion with the media, where they give "real" answers to questions.

At best, such a scenario will put your campaign "off message," at worst, it could lead to some serious verbal gaffes.

To see how this works out in practice, let's pretend we're working on a campaign where the main message we want to get out is that our opponent is too tax happy.

Thus, every answer to any question should include some variation of that idea.

So, if a reporter asks our candidate, "What's your plan to save the environment?" he or she should reply with something along the lines of, "If we want to save the environment, we first need a strong economy, which is why I oppose my opponent's economic plan. He wants to raise taxes; I want to lower them."

Will the reporter like this answer? No. Will it advance your agenda? Yes.

How do you prepare a politician to answer questions thusly?

Well, basically, you must anticipate every possible query

that will be thrown your way by the media, and then you must devise answers that stay on message for each and every one of them.

While working on a campaign, I always prepared a thick binder of such questions and answers.

Then, you sit your candidate down, and you rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.

At some point in this process, I guarantee you, your candidate will complain about having to say the same thing over and over again.

However, this is where you explain that message discipline helps win campaigns.

Now, at this point, I'm sure you're saying, "What about U.S. President Donald Trump? He's a guy with zero message discipline, yet he's also a successful politician."

To that, I would say that Trump is the exception that proves the rule.

Basically, he's a political aberration with a unique style that's virtually impossible to duplicate.

So, if you're just a regular politician, it's still important to prepare a strategic message, and then stick to it.

Anyway, keep all this in mind while observing the political leaders on the campaign trail.

See how well they control the message.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant. *The Hill Times*



The song remains the same: Prime Minister Mark Carney holds a press conference on the Hill on April 3, 2025, in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff announcement. So the ballot question remains the same in this election. Who is the best candidate to deal with Donald Trump? And the answer remains the same, writes Michael Harris. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# Carney is clearly the most qualified candidate to take on Trump

Even if Trump is using tariffs to negotiate better deals with trading partners, that process could take up the rest of his presidency. After all, he has levied punitive tariffs against scores of countries. If these countries want to negotiate an exemption or a carveout, they will have to stand in a very long line to get to the president.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—Call it the horrible hundred.

It took Donald Trump just 100 days of his second term as America's president to start what is now being called World War-T.

Trump himself describes his ruinous trade war as a fundamental transformation of the global trading system.

Visionary economics, you see. Make America rich again. Punish the scoundrels abroad who have been "ripping America off," including the "nasty" Canadians. Bring back manufacturing to the good old U.S.A. Trump think.

Here is another way to put it. Thanks to Trump, more than \$3-trillion of goods on the planet now have an average tariff of 23 per cent. Free trade or fee trade? Because tariffs are always a tax, that means all these products are now 23 per cent more expensive.

Rising prices mean higher inflation. April 2 was not Liberation Day. It was Recession Day. It was the day that stock markets in the U.S. and around the world crashed, like that jet at Pearson International that recently flipped upside down after landing.

The abiding irony? Trump is, in effect, trying to force American taxpayers to finance trillions of dollars in tax cuts for the rich, cuts that he wants to make permanent.

As if further proof were necessary, Trump is proving that he is

the Master Destroyer. Mr. Cheese Head, Elon Musk, merely took a chainsaw to American government and society. Trump has unleashed a wrecking ball into an international trading system that was 70 years in the making.

In 1930, Washington, D.C., put tariffs on foreign goods under the Smoot-Harley Act. Economists looking back say that the draconian tariffs ushered in by the legislation actually exacerbated the Great Depression.

What comes in the wake of Trump's economic iconoclasm? Tariffs disappear when America gets everything. U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance put a cherry on top of Trump's insolence.

Vance warned other countries not to impose retaliatory tariffs. If they did, he threatened that the Trump administration would impose even more punishing levies.

Not totally surprising, coming from a guy who says, like his boss, that the U.S. should take over Greenland and make Canada the 51st state. But does he really expect others to take a beating without throwing a punch?

Take, for instance, the country with the second most billionaires in the world. China now faces 54 per cent tariffs selling into the U.S. Does Vance really think that China will roll over, or

throw open its doors to American goods?

No one on the receiving end of Trump's economic assaults should expect any help from wiser heads in the administration or the Congress. The GOP is now the party of lickspittles and enablers.

GOP leadership has allowed Trump to usurp some of their constitutional authority, to deport people without due process, to attack the country's great universities, and to pillory its judges. And they appear to delight in cheerleading for whatever nonsense Clueless Leader spouts.

Toadies like Howard Lutnick are already parroting Trump's line that America is heading into its Golden Age. That's a funny way to describe a recession.

A lot of people have mused that Canada somehow got off lightly in the tariff train wreck. And it is true that this country was not included on the president's hit list, which he held up like a kid in the classroom at show-and-tell time.

Despite that, and other exemptions, it means next to nothing. It should never again be forgotten that the world, including Canada, is dealing with a man who has no trouble breaking international agreements. Trump is as trustworthy as a fox in the hen house.

Nor should it be minimized that this president has imposed unjust and illegal tariffs on Canada's auto industry, and the country's steel and aluminum. Other sectors like lumber may be next.

Prime Minister Mark Carney is spot on with his pledge to impose retaliatory tariffs on the U.S. Those who advise against Carney's policy should remember this: bullies love pushovers, but respect—however grudgingly—the ones who fight back.

As for the effect on Canada's federal election, nothing has changed. There has been a lot of chatter amongst those who believe Canada got off relatively lightly in the wake of Trump's announcement, that this somehow takes care of the tariff issue.

And that, it is argued, favours Pierre Poilievre. Why? Because he can now return to the issues that dominated national politics before Trump changed the ballot question: affordability, housing, and fighting crime.

It could be as easily argued that the PM gets the political advantage for Canada's current tariff status. That's because he was the one who actually spoke to the president and perhaps dissuaded him from taking draconian action against Canada—for now.

But here is the bottom line: the tariff issue is not over. It is just beginning. Trump and his inner circle have themselves warned that it will take time for their tariff policies to bear fruit. It takes years, after all, for companies to relocate to the United States in order to avoid the tariffs, as Trump wants them to.

In the meantime, Trump has also acknowledged there will be short-term pain for consumers, adding that he "couldn't care less" about price increases, because the long-term benefits from his tariff plan will be so great.

And there is another reason that the tariff issue is guaranteed to be around on the long term.

Even if Trump is using tariffs to negotiate better deals with trading partners, that process could take up the rest of his presidency. After all, he has levied punitive tariffs against scores of countries. If these countries want to negotiate an exemption or a carveout, they will have to stand in a very long line to get to the president.

So the ballot question remains the same in this election: who is the best candidate to deal with Donald Trump? And the answer remains the same.

In the long, and complex negotiations ahead, Carney is clearly the most qualified candidate to take on Trump.

Carney has said that the old relationship with a U.S. that could be trusted is over. He has promised to fight the tariffs with "purpose and force" and to build the strongest economy in the G7.

The polls suggest that Canadians believe that he is the man for that job.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

*The Hill Times*

# Questions that should be asked at the leaders' debates



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, and Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet. Every political party should have at least three priorities on reconciliation that reflect their Indigenous citizens' voices, writes Rose LeMay. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

tion. Instead of being all colonial like the Tangerine who would gladly erase Native Americans off the map—literally and in policy—Canada is committed to a relationship with Indigenous Peoples. It's what sets us apart. It is one strength that we can hold on to.

Canada is well beyond the years of superficial and empty responses on reconciliation. We want real action. True understanding. Commitment to fixing things in this country.

Here's to looking forward to political debates when Indigenous voices ask the leaders about their commitments to reconciliation, and asks about the economy on behalf of all Canadians because we're done being tokenized. Imagine that.

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

*The Hill Times*

Here's to looking forward to political debates when Indigenous voices ask the leaders about their commitments to reconciliation, and asks about the economy on behalf of all Canadians because we're done being tokenized.

Rose LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths



OTTAWA—The 2025 election leaders' debates are set for April 16-17, and speech writers are furiously writing and rewriting blurbs in anticipation.

The election is necessarily focused on "the Tangerine's" tantrums in the south, and the impacts on this country. But we can do better than run a one-issue election.

Here are a set of questions that could spark some depth in the debate:

First, what is your platform on reconciliation? It had better not be just one token question in the debate because that's offensive. Bring in APTN, bring in Indigenous voices on the debate. We are past that time when a non-Indigenous individual speaks for us—and in the recent past, with some disdain. Fair warning that if this happens again—a non-Indigenous reporter asks the one token Indigenous question at the debate—a large number of Indigenous Peoples will be disgusted with the media. Ask hard-hitting questions of political leaders on reconciliation, and don't let them off the hook.

What is your party's commitment to the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in this campaign? Political leaders are expected to answer with some data on the number of Indigenous candidates, and proportion of Indigenous staff in the campaign offices. Reconciliation demands inclusion both in terms of candidates and in national campaign offices. No, we are not an "issue" that takes the backstage when something more important comes up. We are a people with rights who demand to be included.

Every political party should have at least three priorities on reconciliation that reflect their Indigenous citizens' voices. What will you do about the ungodly number of Indigenous Peoples killed at the hands of police? How will Indigenous Peoples on- and off-reserve benefit from every economic action taken to soften the tariff blows? What are your commitments to ensuring Indigenous children receive the best possible services and supports, to close the gaps in health and education?

Don't give us some simplistic answer. Build your responses and platforms like you actually care about Indigenous Peoples both on- and off-reserve. Like we are your neighbours.

We need political leaders who act as if it were their own daughters and sisters at risk of getting killed by police for their colour. We need political parties that back-check every economic platform to ensure Indigenous Peoples will benefit. We need political leaders who have been in First Nations communities, Inuit hamlets, Métis settlements, urban Indigenous centres—leaders who actually see how Canada can do better for Indigenous Peoples.

We also judge political leaders on their actions. Obviously, candidates who are residential school denialists need to be punted. This is not a "learning moment," this is a failure moment that warrants the punt. Our lives are more at risk when a leader erases our experiences, so go take your learning to another arena because national politics is not the place for hate.

Why is reconciliation so important? This is one thing that sets us apart from the United States as it drives ever closer to white supremacy in its war on diversity,

equity, and inclusion. Canada is committed to Indigenous inclusion and reconcilia-



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Prime Minister Mark Carney visits his campaign office in the riding of Nepean, Ont., on March 29, 2025. A number of smart observers have commented that they are pleased to see the return of the Progressive Conservatives under their new leader, Mark Carney, writes Jamie Carroll. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# Liberals' success thanks to being less ideologically anchored than other parties

The biggest insult opponents used to hurl at the Liberal Party was that we're ideological whores who stand on the mushy middle and believe in nothing but winning elections. Yet, it's also key to the party's success over the last 100 years.

Jamie Carroll



Opinion

“There’s no whore like an old whore,” Brian Mulroney famously quipped back in 1984, shortly after former Liberal cabinet minister Bryce Mackasey left office and was promptly appointed ambassador to Portugal by prime minister John Turner.

It’s the biggest insult opponents used to hurl at the Liberal

Party of Canada: we’re ideological whores who stand on the mushy middle and believe in nothing but winning elections. And yet, it’s also the key to the party’s overwhelming success over the last 100 years.

The Liberal Party of Canada is the most successful political party in the Western world. It is also one of the least ideologically anchored. That’s not to say there are no ideological boundaries for the party, but they tend to be somewhat nebulous: the Charter, bilingualism, multiculturalism, democracy, and the rule of law. Motherhood and apple pie.

On any number of other issues, Liberals have been more flexible and less rigid in their beliefs than either the Conservatives or the Dippers: conscription, free trade, the GST, electoral reform, deficit spending, and so on. And while some of that has made attractive fodder for partisans, the resurgence of the party under Mark Carney surely argues for the merits of ideological promiscuity.

A number of smart observers have commented that they are pleased to see the return of the Progressive Conservatives under their new leader, Mark Carney. To quote *The Untouchables*, “like most things in life, we laugh because it’s funny and we laugh because it’s true.”

Since Peter MacKay signed the death warrant for the PCs in 2003—by betraying his very public promise to then-member David Orchard—the Conservative Party of Canada has been driven by the ideologies of western Canadian Reformers much more so than the Bay Street fiscal conservatives of the PC days.

To wit, when then-leader Erin O’Toole was seen as moving even slightly to the centre in the interests of, you know, winning an election by attracting moderate voters who felt stuck with Justin Trudeau in 2021 rather than warmed by his “Sunny Ways,” he was immediately and publicly shanked by his own party members—including now-Leader Pierre Poilievre—ultimately leading to his forced resignation as leader after winning the popular vote (not that that’s a thing) and holding Trudeau to another minority.

In more civilized times, O’Toole would certainly have been given a second kick at the can.

But to Conservative ideologues—again including Poilievre—any backsliding to the “mushy middle” is tantamount to treason. and had to be stopped immediately.

The fracas with Alberta Premier Danielle Smith during the first week of the election campaign made this point clearly, as well: the modern CPC is perfectly okay turning a blind eye to one of

their leaders playing footsie with a foreign leader who has publicly committed to doing Canada harm—up to and including our forced annexation—without so much as a word of condemnation.

But “climate change is man made”? “Vaccines save lives”? Pfpt—throw that loon to the wolves!

On the other side of the spectrum, Trudeau was unquestionably the furthest to the left of any leader in Liberal Party’s history—by a lot. His unwavering focus on social issues that were identified and identifiable as “woke” were a feature of his premiership, not a bug. His insistence on abandoning the fiscal prudence that Liberals under prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin had become hard-won advocates for was a clear choice. And partnering with NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh to sustain his government for almost four years kind put the cherry on the cake.

For at least the last several years of Trudeau’s leadership, significant numbers of significant Liberals could be heard kvetching at fundraisers, conventions and parties about the state of affairs. The party was still in power, and the Trudeau PMO was ruthless when it came to quashing dissension in the ranks, but the grumbling still got louder and louder.

Enter Mark Carney.

Not only does he look like he came from central casting for the

role of prime minister of Canada, his CV and his very nature as an economist and banker guarantees a more conservative element in his thinking.

At the same time, as the Conservatives love to point out as if it were somehow a bad thing, Carney has been a passionate advocate for “net-zero,” carbon pricing, and other measures to address the climate crisis.

To many of us who have been around the Liberal Party for longer than a hot minute, that’s the fundamental brand proposition as it was always supposed to be: fiscal responsibility in order to support social good.

Watching the party faithful cheer for Trudeau on his way out while waiting to hear that Carney had won 85 per cent of the votes in the leadership race could seem like cognitive dissonance to outsiders who don’t understand our history: what opponents describe as unprincipled, we see as democratic; what some call hopping on the bandwagon, we call evolving with the public.

And this—far more than any other reason—is why so many people have wrongly written the Liberal Party of Canada off for dead in the past to their own either chagrin or embarrassment: the Liberal Party is a leopard that will happily change its spots when the circumstances call for it.

There’s a lot of hockey left to play—figuratively and literally, one presumes—in this election, but if Carney is able to pull off anything like the comeback polls are currently suggesting, it will be due in no small part to the willingness of the party and its members to evolve and change rather than insisting on clinging to ideology over evolution.

Jamie Carroll is a former national director of the Liberal Party of Canada who now works as a consultant and entrepreneur. *The Hill Times*



Ken Ng, left, chair of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Markham, and then-Liberal MP Paul Chiang at a Lunar New Year reception on the Hill on Feb. 4, 2025. Chiang stepped down last week after he suggested that a Chinese-Canadian political rival be handed over to the Chinese government, which has a bounty out for his arrest. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

# We, the media, haven't done enough to explain how devastating foreign interference can be for individual Canadians

These people are Canadian citizens—our kin. Part of our family. And we're hanging them out to dry. They're crying out for help, help that they are legally and morally owed, and we're shrugging it off.

Matt Gurney

Opinion



**T**ORONTO—The bizarre end—for now, anyway—of the political career of outgoing

Liberal MP Paul Chiang got a lot of attention last week, and you can see why. It was newsy. It was germane to two major political questions: which party is better placed to tackle foreign interference, and also, Mark Carney's surefootedness as a new and largely untested political leader. In the end, as I've quipped before, the inevitable thing happened after far too much time: Chiang announced he'd step down, having been undone by public, on-the-record remarks that a Chinese-Canadian political rival—and Conservative candidate—be handed over to the Chinese government, which has a bounty out for his arrest.

The campaign moved on. The next day brought a fresh culling of candidates. So it goes.

The campaign shouldn't have moved on, though. Not because Chiang should be the ballot question, and not because we should obsess for a whole month about what Carney should have done and when. We should have kept

talking about the issue because the public doesn't understand, and the media hasn't done enough to explain how devastating foreign interference can be for individual Canadians. This was a teachable moment, and we blew it.

For a lot of us, to the very limited extent that we'll think about foreign interference at all, we'll think about it in terms of geopolitical alignments, diaspora politics, and internal party bickering. That's often the lens through which it's reported on and debated by our political parties. And this is as much confession as an accusation—I'm guilty of this, too.

But I really am trying to do better because I know I haven't gotten this right. And I feel genuinely bad about this. We need to do a better job explaining what it feels like to be the target of foreign interference, and we must do a much better job standing up for Canadians

who are in the sights of foreign governments.

I heard about this, direct from a victim, for the first time some years ago. I won't reveal names or details, but I'll go as far as to say the person was of Iranian descent, and had moved to Richmond Hill, Ont., in the 905, north of Toronto. They had taken part in some fairly low-level political protests in Richmond Hill, calling for reforms in Tehran. And that's when the harassment started. They'd get phone calls from blocked numbers at all hours of the day and night asking why they were at the protest, and asking how their family back in Iran was doing.

The implication wasn't subtle. I've heard a lot of other stories like this since—some in on-the-record interviews, but mostly not. People are harassed at home and at work, or online. Their families back in the ancestral countries are brought up. Sometimes it can go as far as vandalism and physical intimidation. Police forces are

generally sympathetic, but not particularly engaged. There are a lot more pressing issues on any given day, so calls for help are often politely listened to, written up, and then ignored.

This is outrageous and it is appalling. These people are Canadian citizens—our kin. Part of our family. And we're hanging them out to dry. They're crying out for help, help that they are legally and morally owed, and we're shrugging it off.

There are some voices inside our media and politics who get this. But not enough. And for all the people targeted by these kinds of campaigns, who live in actual fear for themselves and their families and businesses, seeing Chiang's outrageous comment treated as just more political trivia drives home that Canada is a country that doesn't not really take this issue seriously. We take it seriously only to the extent that any party sees electoral advantage or a media outlet sees a hot story worth chasing.

And, again, folks: confession, not accusation.

I'm trying to do better. I wish our politicians would join me in that. Stop looking at these communities of new Canadians as vote banks, and start looking at them as people who deserve our help when they're targeted by hostile states abroad.

Or just as Canadians. That'll do, too.

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

*The Hill Times*



Prime Minister Mark Carney at his campaign office in Nepean, Ont., on March 29, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# What Canada needs now is more robust, visionary diplomacy, not more military spending

As the present front-runner in the election race, Mark Carney has a special responsibility to straightforwardly pledge support for a global recommitment to international cooperation based on respect for international law as the urgent security imperative for our time.

Ernie Regehr & Douglas Roche

Opinion



**E**DMONTON—In their election campaigns, Canadian political leaders are sidestepping the real issue of this country's security by insisting that more military spending will guarantee our safety. But more arms

have rarely—if ever—advanced durable peace. What we urgently need is more robust and visionary diplomacy.

According to the polls, Mark Carney could well be prime minister for the next four years. He needs to prepare Canadians now for what he would do in what he has called a “new economic and security relationship” with the United States. His economic agenda is coming into focus on the tariffs question. But, aside from promising to boost Canada's military spending to two per cent of GDP by 2030, he has not spoken about the wide agenda for peace that sweeps far beyond military measures.

All the leading contenders in this election keep referring to increased military spending as a primary response to threats to our sovereignty and changing security conditions in the Arctic. As an effort to placate a mercurial American president, this is a fool's errand and, more importantly, it ignores the true foundations on which durable global peace and security are built.

The call on Canada to rally around the old shibboleth “if you want peace, prepare for war” is persuasive only if you ignore what contemporary war most often produces. The Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Ukraine, and Gaza tell the story. The one thing these wars have not brought is peace. In all those devastating conflicts, it is

“  
CONCENTRATING  
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AND PEACE-  
BUILDING AT HOME  
AND ABROAD.”

when the fighting finally stops that peace can begin to be built.

Of course, it should be acknowledged that the Canadian Armed Forces do face some equipment deficiencies and recruitment challenges, which is leading to important corrective measures. Reconsidering the F-35 fighter aircraft purchase and improvements to Arctic patrols and situation awareness in all domains, as well as emergency response capacity, make eminent sense to the extent they respond to Canadian-defined needs. But concentrating only on increased military spending ignores the funds and initiatives needed for equitable human development and peace-building at home and abroad.

Sadly, Canada has now abandoned peacekeeping. Furthermore, the diplomacy, peacebuilding, development, and climate action side of this country's security ledger continues to be woefully under-funded. And the new calls for increased military spending, with no specific commitment to restoring peacekeeping, will further reduce our ability to be a significant player in the much wider agenda for peace.

The UN Agenda for Peace, the Canadian-inspired institution of UN peacekeeping, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, peacebuilding programs around the world, and the UN's 2024 Pact for the Future all point a constructive way forward,

and to the truth that if you want peace, you have to build it. But without exception, all those initiatives are grievously underfunded while global military arsenals are lavished at the rate of over \$2.5-trillion each year.

When the Cold War ended, the major powers explored ways of meeting mutual security interests. Canada played key roles in fostering peacekeeping, the Landmines Treaty, the International Criminal Court, the Responsibility to Protect, disarmament diplomacy, and by staying out of the Iraq war and declining to join the unworkable Strategic Defence Initiative of then-U.S. president Ronald Reagan.

Those Canadian initiatives and actions were concrete achievements that helped to build peace and a stronger world security order, and thus a stronger Canada—but all that has faded from our collective memory. At this hinge moment in world affairs, leaders need to detail their visions for our country once again becoming a strong diplomatic player in building the conditions for peace.

These four pillars of a reconstructed peace architecture need Canada's support:

- Equitable economic and social development built through more public and private financial support for the UN Sustainable Development Goals;

- Measures to cut carbon emissions and drive investment towards sustainable energy to defend against catastrophic climate change and mitigate consequences;

- Arms control to rehabilitate a failing infrastructure, challenge the U.S., Russia, and China to pursue mutual restraint, promote the “denuclearization” that U.S. President Donald Trump has advocated, and renew disarmament diplomacy and sign on to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and

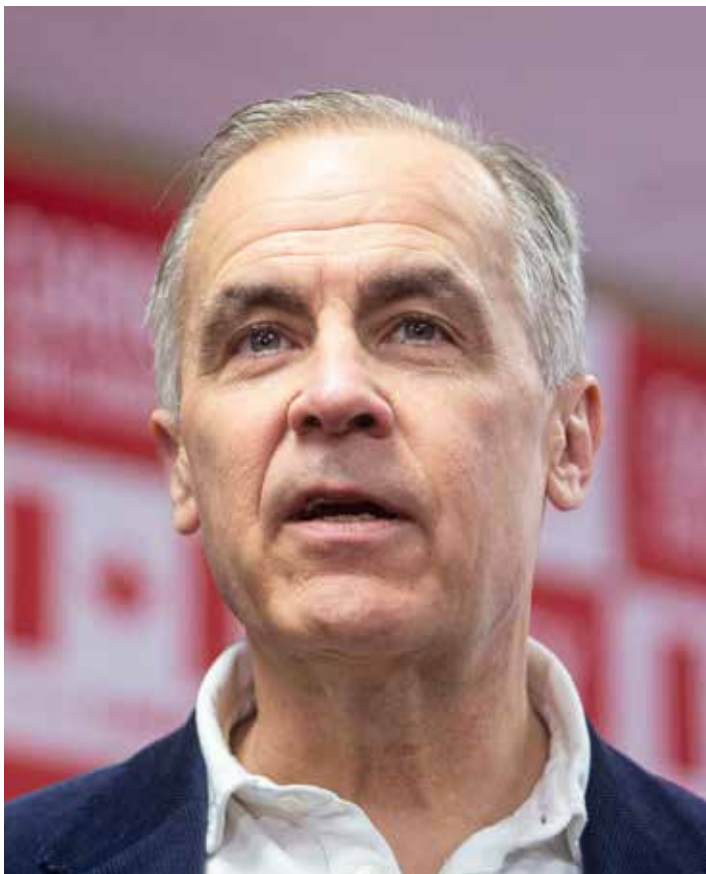
- Human rights protection—notably of the peoples of Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, and other war-torn places—through international peace forces operating under international law and vigorous multilateral peace-building.

In the Pact for the Future, endorsed by virtually all world leaders, states have agreed to address the root causes of conflicts, and to accelerate commitments to human rights. This is where Canada needs to invest its diplomatic and soft-power strength. In doing the right thing, our nation will also be strengthened to meet the challenges coming our way from our erstwhile continental partner.

As the present front-runner in the election race, Carney has a special responsibility to straightforwardly pledge support for a global recommitment to international cooperation based on respect for international law as the urgent security imperative for our time.

*Ernie Regehr is the founding executive director of Project Ploughshares, and author of The Simons Foundation's Arctic Security Briefing Papers. Former Senator Douglas Roche is the author of Keep Hope Alive: Essays for a War-free World (Amazon).*

*The Hill Times*



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, and United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Britain was able to quickly create its National Wealth Fund by taking an existing public entity and adding new activities. We could do the same in Canada, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade and courtesy Wikimedia Commons

month, the British government published a directive setting out the fund's role and how it should operate. The goal is to partner with the private sector, including pension plans, with the goal of making \$1 of investment for every \$3 from the private sector. It is also expected, over time, to deliver a positive financial return, covering at a minimum the government's cost of borrowing, plus overhead.

Carney played a role in the establishment of Britain's wealth fund: As a private citizen, he was a member of the task force that advised the Starmer government on the design of the fund. It reported with its recommendations in May 2024. So it shouldn't have been a big surprise that after Carney had joined Brookfield Asset Management to learn that, last September, Brookfield was engaged in talks with Canada's leading pension funds to create a similar \$50-billion wealth fund in this country.

At the time, the idea was quickly dismissed by the Conservatives, and used as an opportunity to disparage Carney and to suggest ulterior motives. "Brookfield's 2023 financial report shows that Carney holds \$1-million in stock options in their firm," the Conservatives said. "If Trudeau were to grant Brookfield's request, how much would Mark Carney stand to personally profit?"

Yet, the idea has much merit and deserves further investigation. We need to find a way to link private funds—including pension funds—with government funds to accelerate infrastructure development in Canada, and to act as a source of long-term patient equity to support the scaling up of our best young companies into global champions. Britain was able to follow through quickly in creating its own National Wealth Fund by taking an existing public entity, its infrastructure bank, and adding new activities, such as equity funding for strategic business sectors. We could do the same in Canada.

There are other ways to use tax incentives and public capital to build up Canadian firms and fund infrastructure—the funds needed are beyond the existing capacity of governments alone. As stock market guru David Rosenberg has suggested, we could tap the savings of Canadians by issuing some kind of Canada growth bond, modelled on the one-time and successful Canada Savings Bond campaigns. We could extend so-called flow-through shares to strategic sectors to help young companies raise capital, adopt a program like the U.S.'s Small Business Innovation Research initiative to help young enterprises develop new technologies, have mission-oriented large-scale projects to develop and demonstrate new solutions to major problems.

There's much we could—and must—do to successfully make what is an urgent need in response to Trump's economic war. But we need a plan—so where is it?

*David Crane can be reached at crane@interlog.com.*

*The Hill Times*

# Canada urgently needs a new growth strategy in response to Trump's economic war

We need a plan—so where is it?

David Crane

Canada & the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



**T**ORONTO—With his "Liberation Day," United States President Donald Trump has declared economic war on the rest of the world—including Canada. We have retaliated, as we have to. But we must move beyond retaliation and negotiation to a new growth strategy for our country.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has made it clear from the start that his priorities are investment and growth. Canada has been underperforming for some time. But now this must be investment and growth in a world turned upside down by Trump. It means radical change, not tweaking at the margins.

"We will need to dramatically reduce our reliance on the United States. We will need to pivot our trade relationships elsewhere. And we will need to do things previously thought impossible at speeds we haven't seen in generations," Carney said. We must achieve "strategic economic autonomy."

What does this mean? "We will need to ensure that Can-

ada can succeed in a drastically different world. The old relationship we had with the U.S. based on deepening integration of our economies and tight security and military co-operation is over," Carney said. But how? He warns this will take time. "There is no silver bullet. There is no quick fix."

This is a message that calls for bold ideas—and actionable implementation. There has to be a plan. Yet despite his call for sweeping change and new ideas and policies, Carney has so far failed to tell Canadians how he would create a new economy for a country that seeks to be prosperous and sovereign.

We need to see a plan.

One key goal of such a plan has to include initiatives to grow Canadian companies that have the high value-added products and services they can profitably sell to the rest of the world. This is critical to generate good jobs and the wealth to sustain and improve vital public services such as education, health care, national security, and infrastructure.

Without these successful firms, we won't get the jobs and wealth we need for the future. We have to change the recurring Canadian pattern: we create many young businesses with high-value products and services, with ownership of their own intellectual property giving them the freedom to operate.

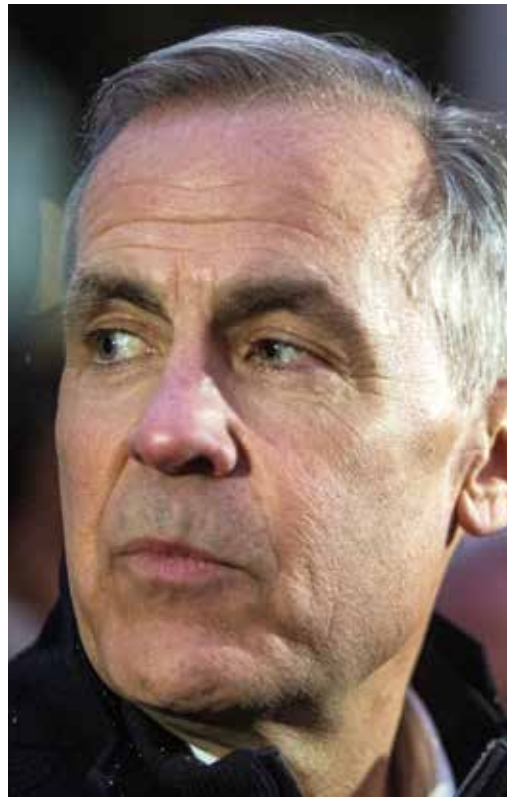
“

This is where Carney's own experience can be helpful. The government of Keir Starmer in Britain is pursuing an ambitious industrial strategy, underling that the government's top priority is economic growth.

But because of our financial system's failings, weak public-sector procurement, and tax policies unsuited for the age of intellectual property and data, for example, we don't scale up the best of these companies into world-scale enterprises. Instead, too many end up being sold to American and other foreign multinationals who go on to realize the potential of these enterprises. We create seed corn for others. This has to change. Our ambitious entrepreneurs are our future, but they need support.

This is where Carney's own experience can be helpful. The government of Keir Starmer in Britain is pursuing an ambitious industrial strategy, underling that the government's top priority is economic growth. To achieve higher growth, Starmer's government has created what it calls a National Wealth Fund with almost \$50-billion in capital to mobilize private investment with public-sector finance to build infrastructure and invest in patient capital—money a small or medium-sized private business raises—needed by businesses in eight high-priority sectors for a more competitive, high-value economy.

The National Wealth Fund's mandate is to support the government's growth agenda, including developing innovative finance solutions, operating at arm's length from government. Last



To break the Liberals' momentum under Mark Carney, right, Pierre Poilievre's Conservatives will have to 'bomb the bridge' of the prime ministers' credibility, says pollster Greg Lyle. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

# Poilievre needs to 'bomb the bridge' of Carney's credibility to win, say political players

BY ABBAS RANA

As one of the "most consequential" election campaigns enters its third week, the Liberals are leading in the polls, and if the Conservatives hope to win, they will need to seriously undermine Mark Carney's credibility—much like Brian Mulroney's Tories did to John Turner's Liberals in the 1988 campaign.

"Remember, in 1988, the Tories said that they had to bomb the bridge on John Turner," said Greg Lyle, president of Innovative Research, in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "Well, the job of the Tories in 2025 is to bomb the bridge of Carney's credibility."

Defining one's opponent in a negative light is a common strategy across all political parties. Mulroney did it to Turner; and the Jean Chrétien Liberals employed the same tactic against leaders of

the Reform and Alliance parties. Liberal prime minister Paul Martin did so against Stephen Harper's Conservatives, who then went onto politically dismantle the red team under Stéphane Dion and then Michael Ignatieff. Although the Conservatives attempted to do the same to Justin Trudeau in 2015, it didn't work.

When Pierre Poilievre became Conservative leader in 2022, many expected the Liberals to launch attack ads against him. But, the Liberals lacked adequate financial resources to do so. In contrast, the Conservatives spent millions of dollars shaping a favourable public image of Poilievre. For more than 18 months, the party maintained a double-digit lead.

That trend shifted after Trudeau announced his exit plans in early January. As the governing party, the Liberals received

a further boost from the United States President Donald Trump's tariffs on Canada, positioning the party advantageously in the emerging trade conflict with the U.S.

Even before Carney officially secured the Liberal leadership on March 9, the Conservatives had already begun airing attack ads against him. However, those efforts have not produced the results they'd hoped for—at least, not as of last week.

Lyle said that there are currently two key ballot questions: who is best positioned to negotiate with Trump, and whether it's time for a change in government. If the Conservatives want to win the next election, they need to convince Canadians that the second question—time for change—is the one that matters most.

He explained that the Liberals currently lead all parties because they are the preferred option for left-of-centre voters. At the same time, the Liberals are attempting to attract fiscally conservative—or "blue"—Liberal voters. However, they must tread carefully: if they shift too far to the right, they risk alienating their progressive base.

Lyle said that Carney's tone is resonating more with business-oriented Liberals and moderate Conservatives, compared to Poilievre's more aggressive style.

He also mentioned the importance of the Bloc Québécois vote. While the Bloc remains a significant force in Quebec, it's clear they will never form government, which is dampening enthusiasm among some Bloc supporters. As the race tightens, whichever party—Liberal or Conservative—appears to be within reach of forming a majority will likely appeal to Bloc-leaning voters by asking them: "do you want to be on the inside or the outside?"

Lyle also said that while Poilievre has been in public life for nearly two decades, Carney is still relatively new to the political scene, and many Canadians don't yet know much about him. This gives the Conservatives an

opening to try to hold Carney to account based on his past record in both the public and private sectors.

Lyle said that while he hasn't specifically tested the Conservative ads, he said the ones he's seen come across as "mean-spirited," which tends to turn people off. He suggested that the Conservatives should avoid using ominous imagery and music, and instead create ads that are attention-grabbing without being off-putting.

"Every day that goes along without someone really hitting them with something that hurts is good news for [Carney]," Lyle said. "He's another day closer to the finish line, but still, people will end up in this campaign still with a lot of uncertainty about him."

On the other hand, Lyle said, the Bloc and the NDP are going to make an argument that neither Carney nor Poilievre are the right people to address issues like the gap between the rich and the poor. They can say both leaders are on the side of big business.

Lyle said that one argument Poilievre can make to Canadians is to link the desire for change with the challenge of dealing with Trump. He suggested Poilievre could frame it by saying that the best way to confront Trump is through rebuilding Canada's economy and diversifying our international trade—whereas Carney, who advised Trudeau, represents the opposite approach.

Most polling firms are currently reporting momentum on the Liberal side. On the low end, Abacus Data shows a statistical tie, with the Liberals and Conservatives both at 39 per cent, and the NDP at 11 per cent. On the high end, EKOS Research reports a 12-point Liberal lead, placing the Liberals at 48 per cent, Conservatives at 36 per cent, and the NDP at six per cent, as of March 31.

According to the polling aggregator 338Canada, if an election were held today, the Liberals would receive 43 per cent of the vote, followed by the Conservatives at 38 per cent, the NDP at eight per cent, the Bloc at six per cent, and the Greens at three per cent. The margin of error is plus or minus five percentage points for the Liberals, plus or minus four per cent for the Conserva-

tives, plus or minus two percent for the NDP, and plus or minus one per cent for both the Bloc and the Greens.

Based on these figures, 338 Canada projects that the Liberals would win 191 seats, the Conservatives 126, the Bloc 18, the NDP seven, and the Greens one. The range of possible outcomes shows the Liberals winning between 164 and 220 seats, while the Conservatives could secure between 101 and 150. For the Bloc, the range is nine to 27 seats; for the NDP, one to 13 seats; and for the Greens, zero to two seats.

Frank Graves, CEO of Ekos Research, said this election campaign is both unique and highly consequential, as the next prime minister will play a critical role in shaping the country's future—particularly in redefining Canada's relationship with its largest trading partner, the U.S., and in forging new trade alliances with other Western nations.

According to his polling, there is a "visceral sort of concern" emerging among voters. This worry stems from several key issues: Trump's trade war and confrontational stance toward Canada, his unilateral moves such as proposing to give parts of Ukraine back to Russia without consulting Ukraine, and his vision of transforming Gaza into a resort.

He added that many Canadians believe Trump's actions will have long-term effects on the U.S. and its global influence, even after he leaves office.

Remarkably, Graves said that as recently as early January, the Liberals were trailing the Conservatives by 25 points. Now, they are leading by 14 points—a dramatic 39-point swing in just two months.

"That has produced a belief that we are undergoing a rupture with the United States, which most Canadians in my polling say is not going to heal itself or return just on the exit of Donald Trump, whenever that might be," said Graves.

"He's [Trump] now talking about a third term. So the clear majority [of Canadians], say 'no, I don't think it's going back to normal. These are permanent changes,' and [the Trump factor] has affected how we see our place in the world, how we see our own country, in ways that have produced an election which is clearly at a level of stakes that we haven't seen in perhaps our lifetime. I can't think of another one."

According to a recent Ekos Research poll conducted between March 28 and April 2 suggested 75 per cent of Canadians believe the current election is the most important in the past 50 years. Graves explained that he selected a 50-year timeframe because it roughly reflects the voting lifetime of most Canadians, who typically begin voting at age 18. Prior to 1970, the voting age in Canada was 21.

The same poll also explored the emotional outlook of voters: 52 per cent reported feeling hopeful about the election, while 18 per cent felt discouraged, another 18 per cent felt fearful, and seven per cent expressed anger.

arana@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times



Polls are suggesting that the Liberals are making gains at the expense of the New Democrats and party leader Jagmeet Singh. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia





# Arctic security takes spotlight as Canadian sovereignty remains key campaign issue

The prominent focus on defence this election shows ‘a reorientation’ as Canada faces ‘an existential threat,’ says Liberal John McKay, who is not seeking re-election.

BY SERGIY SLIPCHENKO

Parties are pitching Arctic security solutions with defence emerging as a ballot-box issue, but experts warn the promises lack detail and long-term vision to address the sovereignty threats facing Canada.

U.S. President Donald Trump’s repeated references to the country as America’s “51<sup>st</sup> state” has thrust national defence into the spotlight. It has forced federal party leaders to contend with a fractured Canada-U.S. relationship, and address gaps in defence spending that many have been urging for years, said Emily Thorne, vice-president at Crestview Strategy.

“It is a good sign that all parties are taking this space very seriously and are seeking to make it a centerpiece of their campaigns. It is very much reflective of the moment,” said Thorne, who

counts defence among the files she works on at the firm.

“Both the Liberals and the Conservatives are headed in the right direction, but it’s simply a matter of actually bringing it to bear. We’ve seen all kinds of Arctic commitments before, and regardless of [the] party or who holds power, very little of it has come to fruition.”

Liberal Leader Mark Carney’s first domestic stop after becoming prime minister was to Iqaluit, Nunavut. During his March 18 visit, Carney announced a partnership with Australia to acquire a \$6-billion Over-the-Horizon Radar system, and a federal investment of nearly \$420-million to expand the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) presence in the Arctic.

A week later and a day after the election call, Carney unveiled his defence platform in Halifax, N.S. He promised to “rebuild, reinvest, and rearm” the CAF through a variety of measures tackling procurement issues, recruitment gaps, and more.

Retiring Liberal MP John McKay said the party’s defence platform should focus on “decision speed” to address the “snail’s pace” that marks Canada’s current approach to procurement.

“We are in an existential threat, and so we need much snappier decision timelines,” said McKay, who chaired the House National Defence Committee before Parliament was prorogued.

On the campaign trail, Carney has repeated a pledge to review Canada’s fighter jet fleet deal with Lockheed Martin and the U.S. government. The 88 planes are projected to cost US\$85-million each, but switching course to another supplier would likely add to the price tag. As for concerns that diversifying the F-35 fleet would be too expensive, McKay said independence isn’t free.

“Sovereignty costs money. We, as a nation, are coming to a time of reckoning that we’re just simply going to have to focus on our own defence and security, and the consequence for that is we need to be able to build stuff.”

Like Carney, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh both made stops in Iqaluit before the expected snap election. In early February, Poilievre held a press conference in Nunavut’s capital where he promised to build a new military base, procure two new polar icebreakers for the Royal Canadian Navy, and to double the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group from 2,000 members to 4,000, should he become Canada’s next prime minister.

Thomas Juneau, a professor of public and international affairs at the University of Ottawa, threw cold water on the recent pre-election and campaign defence promises, dismissing the platforms as “tools to win votes” rather than thorough strategies voters can count on.

“It’s easy to say [build a] base in Iqaluit, but how much is that going to cost?” he said of the Conservative pledge. “What are you going to do with that base? What assets are you going to station there? Will there be permanent personnel? How much?”

Singh’s March 16 visit to the territory touched on Arctic sovereignty and national security, including a promise that an NDP government would cancel the F-35 contract with the United States and develop a domestic alternative, meet NATO’s defence spending goal of two per cent of national GDP by 2032, and build 5,000 new homes to address military housing shortages.

Even the electoral platforms of the Bloc Québécois and Green Party highlight the need for the federal government to increase defence spending and bolster its ability to protect the Canadian Arctic.

But Juneau said what the parties have presented so far has been “extraordinarily underwhelming.”

“It’s piecemeal initiatives meant to appeal to specific constituencies of voters, but none of [the parties] come even remotely close to having a plausible strategy to deal with the moment,” said Juneau.

“We have seen parties pay a fair bit of attention to the Arctic because there’s a heavy domestic component, and because it’s possible for them to try to appeal to a nationalist fibre by talking about Arctic security and defence.”

Promises about cancelling the F-35 contract with the U.S. are “not realistic,” said Juneau.

“The U.S. remains our only neighbour, so from a trade perspective and a security and defence perspective, we are still going to have to deal with the U.S. We are still going to have to manage that relationship,” he said, noting that the Royal Canadian Air Force is set to receive its first batch of American fighter jets starting in 2026.

Purchasing another option would mean the government must maintain and operate two distinct fighter jets, said Juneau.

“It’s very easy for the NDP or for others in the media or the opposition to say ‘we should cancel the F-35.’ I absolutely understand the appeal of saying that,

Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh all made pre-election campaign-style stops in Iqaluit, Nunavut, and offered promises related to their respective parties’ plans for Arctic security. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade, Sam Garcia

but in practice, that would be an extraordinarily complex, complicated, and costly decision.”

In addition to a tense relationship with the U.S., the Canadian Arctic faces potential threats posed by Russia and China’s increased presence in the Arctic, noted Yuri Cormier, executive director of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute.

“There’s growing consensus amongst political parties that there’s no way that Canada can get out of [increasing defence spending],” said Cormier. “The expectation is we’re going to be burden sharing with our allies and it’s not only the Americans who are pushing us in that direction, but the Europeans as well.”

## Canada must ‘step up’ on recruitment: McKay

McKay said the defence discussion during this campaign, particularly with the Liberals, “shows a reorientation.”

“I did nine elections and I can’t ever recall defence being prominent in both parties’ platforms and in discussion [during] the campaign.”

He said investing in recruitment and retention of “quality” people should be a top priority for the federal government.

“The first priority in my mind is personnel, personnel, personnel. We just need to step up the game quickly,” he said, including improving the pay grades. “This is the backbone of any military, the quality of their personnel.”

In February, the CAF offered an update on efforts to rebuild to 71,500 regular force and 30,000 reserve force members. As of Jan. 31, the Forces were short 6,848 regular personnel and 6,764 reservists of the authorized strength in 2024-25. The CAF has set 2029 as the internal target date to reach “full strength,” and at the February update noted a recent uptick in applicants this year.

Thorne said the shortage issue is long-standing and requires “sustained political will” post-election to address the shortfall.

David Perry, president of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, said even if a future federal government acquires the necessary equipment needed to defend the Arctic—such as submarines, icebreakers, and fighter jets—it does not have enough personnel to properly maintain and crew them.

“Fixing that recruiting and training problem should be a pretty fundamental part of any future plan because if you don’t rapidly reduce the [staffing] shortfall that we’ve got we won’t have enough people to operate ... an Arctic base, new ice breakers or anything else,” said Perry.

Canada needs a “more continuous, reliable awareness of what happens” in the Arctic, said Perry, noting a base would be a good step.

It would mean hosting more military assets located in the north, instead of having to fly in equipment and people when needed, said Perry. He added having more people living in the Arctic would also improve operations, versus relying on deployments from the country’s southern regions.

“That could enhance [Canada’s] presence that would feed into greater surveillance.”

*The Hill Times*

# Trump-led U.S. an 'unreliable partner' for Canada, says expert group: 'we're dealing with an administration that doesn't believe our country has a right to exist'

Expert Group on Canada-U.S. Relations says the dramatic change in U.S. behaviour requires a Canadian strategy based on three principles: diversifying Canada's trade and security relationships, including through the acquisition of new military equipment; addressing the country's declining productivity levels compared to other G7 countries; and 'providing for our own security.'

Continued from page 1

they were stronger and more prosperous when they worked together"—that is, until Jan. 20, 2025, the day of Trump's second inauguration as president, "when annexing Canada became the official policy of the new administration," according to the expert group, which includes former Canadian diplomat Colin Robertson and retired Royal Canadian Navy vice-admiral Mark Norman among its members.

Beatty characterizes Jan. 20 as "Canadian Independence Day," when this country was forced to "take our future into our own hands to provide for our own security and sovereignty."

As the expert group's report states: "What reason do we have to assume that a country whose leader questions our very right to exist will come to Canada's defence if, for example, Russia or China challenges Canada's Arctic sovereignty."

If the obligations of the U.S. to protect a fellow NATO member are in doubt, the Trump administration has already demonstrated



As the Expert Group on Canada-U.S. Relations concluded in its report, 'the world was a dangerous place before Donald Trump's election' as president, and 'has been made more perilous by his ... replacement of the rule of law with the rule of power.' Photograph courtesy of Gage Skidmore/Flickr

disregard for its other commitments, such as those under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA)—which the president signed in 2020 during his first term in the White House—through "the unilateral imposition of massive tariffs on Canada"—under the "the false claim of a flood of fentanyl and illegal immigrants from Canada ... designed to shield the implementation of tariffs from legal challenges," said the expert group whose work is supported by Carleton University's Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, and the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

"Even if we can negotiate an extension of CUSMA and the withdrawal of tariffs imposed by the Trump administration, what is the worth of Donald Trump's signature?"

Beatty said the fallout extends further. In his view, the U.S. under Trump has "violated and destroyed" Canada's trust, "which makes it very difficult to continue with the relationship as it once was."

"There's been a permanent change in the relationship that even if Trump were to withdraw all the threats and tariffs against Canada, we couldn't go back to the comfortable, rock-solid assumption that the president of the United States would not try to actively damage Canada," said Beatty, a former minister of national defence, who also served as secretary of state for external affairs—today's foreign affairs minister—in the Campbell government.



Perrin Beatty: 'We're dealing with an [American] administration that doesn't believe that our country has a right to exist.' Handout photograph



Carleton University professor Fen Hampson, co-chair of the expert group, said that Canada needs to reduce its dependence on the U.S. economically, 'and start trading with the world.' Handout photograph

"This is a dramatic change from what we've known since World War II where there has been a confidence that America's word was its bond."

In its report, the expert group said that "the dramatic change in U.S. behaviour" requires a Canadian strategy based on three principles: diversifying this country's trade and security relationships, including through the acquisition of new military equipment; addressing the nation's declining productivity levels compared to other G7 countries; and "provid-

ing for our own security," and not rely on "a country whose president's official policy is that we should not exist."

Beatty said that it will require "a massive exercise of rethinking, rebuilding, and restructuring."

Carleton University international affairs professor Fen Hampson, the expert group's co-chair, said that Canada needs to reduce its dependence on the U.S. economically, "and start trading with the world."

The report suggested that Canada capitalize on its "main

comparative advantage" in products that can be sold worldwide, "particularly our commodities, including energy, potash, uranium, critical minerals, seafood, canola, wheat and other agricultural products."

The report said that to get those goods to global markets, Canada will need to invest in the requisite infrastructure—roads, rail, ports, and pipelines—which will take years to complete, said Hampson.

He said the focus for new markets should be in Asia, "where you have the fastest growing middle-class in the world and a real demand for commodities."

"It's not just China—it's India, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, plus the industrialized economies: South Korea and Japan," Hampson said.

During the current election campaign, Carney said "there are partners in Asia" with whom Canada "can build deeper ties," but qualified that "the partners in Asia that share our values don't include China."

Also recommended in the expert group's report is the creation of a federal cabinet-led "situation room," supported by senior officials from key government departments—such as Global Affairs, Finance, and the Privy Council Office—that would be "tasked to prepare for worst-case scenarios arising from the actions of the Trump administration and their impact on Canada's economy and national security."

"Its role must be predictive, prescriptive and, where possible, preventive to head off a crisis before it occurs," said the expert group, which also suggested that the situation room "would support—or potentially replace the cabinet committee on Canada-U.S. relations (chaired by Prime Minister Mark Carney and that also includes national security) and the Prime Minister's Council on Canada-U.S. Relations."

Following his first call with Trump on March 28, Carney said in a statement that the two leaders "agreed to begin comprehensive negotiations about a new economic and security relationship immediately following the election."

However, the expert group advised that while Canada should expect to live in a tariff world during the Trump era, it should exercise patience when negotiating a new trading regime. Tariff-driven price increases in the U.S. could pressure the Republican administration to "dial back" on duties or change the tariff strategy "dramatically" should there be backlash from right-leaning politicians or their supporters in the 2026 mid-term elections.

Canada must also be ready for the Trump White House to insist that everything should be on the negotiating table, "including sectors that have traditionally been no-go zones for Canada," such as the supply management system that sets quotas and prices for the dairy, poultry and eggs sectors, said the report.

In an interview with Fox News on April 2, People's Party of

Continued on page 19

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Canada Leader Maxime Bernier said that Canada should commit to ending supply management “right now” before CUSMA is scheduled for renegotiation beginning in July 2026.

The expert group said that if the U.S. “demands significant concessions” on supply management, “we should insist that they reciprocate and lower, if not eliminate, their agricultural subsidies in the dairy and poultry sectors.”

“Our farmers cannot compete without a level playing field,” said the report, which noted that before negotiations begin with the America “Canada should decide what is essential to preserve, what we are prepared to concede, and what we want from the U.S.”

Hampson said that with the American push to manufacture vehicles at home and to slap tariffs on those made in Canada, the U.S. needs to highlight that

Canada is “the biggest export market for U.S. autos, and we’re the fifth-largest market for cars in the world.”

“If their goal through escalating tariffs is to kill the auto industry in Canada, we can tell them that we will put 100-per-cent tariffs on every car and truck that’s made in the United States ensuring that they will never sell another car or truck in Canada,” he said, adding that Canada should look to Europe and Asia to produce and sell vehicles here.

As the expert group concluded in its report: “the world was a dangerous place before Donald Trump’s election” as president, and “has been made more perilous by his ... replacement of the rule of law with the rule of power.”

Could the president’s plan to use “economic force” against Canada descend into a display of military might against its northern neighbour?

In an essay published on *The Conversation* back in February,

University of Toronto political science professor Aisha Ahmad warned that if Trump’s relentless threats to annex this country led to an American military invasion, the result would be “a decades-long violent resistance, which would ultimately destroy the United States.”

Beatty said he doesn’t believe that would ever happen, and views that scenario as “fanciful stuff” and “more of the makings of a Hollywood movie.”

But maybe within the reality of Trump’s verbal and policy threats to Canadian sovereignty, there’s a happy ending to the soured story of a longstanding cross-border friendship.

“I don’t expect to see the hostile relationship that he has created lasting over the longer term,” said Beatty, the former president and CEO of both the CBC and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. “I hope common sense will prevail.”

*The Hill Times*

## Expert Group on Canada-U.S. Relations

Co-chairs: Perrin Beatty and Fen Osler Hampson

Signatories: Thomas d’Aquino, Carlo Dade, Martha Hall Findlay, Jonathan Fried, Lawrence L. Herman, Gary Mar, retired vice-admiral Mark Norman, Vincent Rigby, Colin Robertson, John Weekes

### Broken Trust: Managing an Unreliable Ally

- Executive summary: The United States, under President Donald Trump, has become an unreliable partner. Its longstanding allies can no longer be confident that America will respect its commitments to come to their defence or respect its economic agreements. That is particularly true for Canada.
- This report identifies concrete measures to mitigate Canada’s risk of depending on an ally, trading partner, and neighbour who has become unreliable to the point of hostility.
- The report urges the federal government to create a dedicated, cabinet-led “Situation Room” to analyse problems, coordinate government responses, solicit input and collaboration with the provinces and the private sector, and propose solutions to the successive crises that Canada will be forced to contend with during the Trump presidency.
- In addition, it offers a series of recommendations about how Canada’s next government should negotiate with the Trump Administration on tariffs and broader trade and security matters.
- The report argues that Canada should resist the temptation to rush prematurely into negotiations with the Trump administration until there is greater clarity in the current political mayhem in Washington about where the administration’s trade policies are ultimately headed.

Source: Broken Trust Managing an Unreliable Ally.

# Canada needs a national strategy for security, trade, and economy to contend with Trump, say political science experts

Continued from page 6

that “unjust and unfair tariffs” had boosted Liberal support in Canada, and that she has asked Trump administration officials to “put things on pause” until after the election. Smith also faced some backlash for travelling to Florida to attend a PragerU East Coast Gala event on March 28, where she joined Ben Shapiro, a controversial U.S. right-wing political commentator and podcaster, for a fireside chat. In a December 2024 podcast, Shapiro said he felt Canadians would “greet us as liberators” if the Trump administration were to follow through on threats to annex the country.

Alberta NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi accused Smith of being “more than happy to placate Trump during the worst economic crisis facing our country than she is willing to work with Canadians,” in a March 23 post on X.

Smith responded to her critics during a session in the Alberta Legislature on March 26, where she argued she had been “fiercely criticized for going into the lion’s den” to try to change the minds of Americans about tariffs. She also accused Prime Minister Mark Carney and Nenshi of trying to “frighten and divide Canadians.”

“Now, all of a sudden, it is treason to talk to American media personalities that we disagree with. It is disloyal to try and persuade high-profile Republicans holding influence with the presi-



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith said in the Alberta Legislature on March 26 that she’s been ‘fiercely criticized for going into the lion’s den’ to try to change the minds of Americans about tariffs. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

dent to abandon his tariff policies on Canada. Indeed, it is a high crime to try and convince U.S. officials to refrain from imposing tariffs until after our country has an elected leader with a strong mandate,” Smith said in her statement to the Legislative Assembly. “I will not be silent. Alberta will not be silent.”

### Canada needs to ‘do more and be more autonomous’ in intelligence gathering, says professor

Carney told reporters on March 25 that he has a responsibility to plan for the worst, and that “part of that response is to be

more and more Canadian in our defence capabilities.” He made those remarks a day after it was reported by news outlets that U.S. Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth and U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance leaked war plans for upcoming military strikes in Yemen through a Signal group chat, which included Jeffrey Goldberg, the editor-in-chief for *The Atlantic* magazine.

Stephanie Carvin, associate professor of international affairs with Carleton University, said that, when it comes to intelligence gathering, Canada should be doing more, and it should be more autonomous.

Last year, then-U.S. president Joe Biden ordered his national security team to establish work-

ing groups to monitor a campaign by Russia that involved targeting the U.S. and Europe for sabotage, disinformation and cyberattacks. However, under the Trump administration, several American national security agencies have since halted that work, according to a report in Reuters on March 19, which cited as sources 11 current and former U.S. officials who requested anonymity.

“The U.S. has reduced its intelligence collection on Russia. It has basically eliminated all of the security and intelligence around electoral integrity, and so there are going to be some gaps there that may need to be filled. And Canada has a particular interest in the Arctic, especially vis-à-vis Russia, so this may be something

that we need to actually focus on,” said Carvin.

“Canada does have a lot of intelligence co-operation outside of the Five Eyes that I think is not as well known. We do a lot with the Dutch. We do a lot with other European countries, but also I think we should be building capacity in the Indo-Pacific.”

On March 11, the U.S. resumed military aid and intelligence sharing with Ukraine after delegates from Kyiv agreed to a White House proposal for a 30-day interim ceasefire with Russia.

Maria Popova, an associate professor of political science at McGill University, told *The Hill Times* that if the U.S. were to cut Ukraine loose, the country would continue resisting Russia’s invasion with European assistance.

Ukraine domestically produces almost 50 per cent of the military equipment that it needs to fight, and with Europe’s help, the loss of the 25 per cent that the U.S. provides “can be bridged somewhat,” she said in an emailed statement on March 31.

“The biggest challenge would be the potential loss of American intelligence, but Ukraine will not submit to Russia’s currently maximalist demands of de facto capitulation and loss of sovereignty just because the U.S. walks away,” she said in the email.

The bigger danger, Popova argued, is if the U.S. doesn’t simply walk away, but actively helps Russia in its war against Ukraine and Europe.

“Unfortunately, given the dramatic pivot to Russia and the shocking channelling of Russian disinformation by Trump administration officials, we cannot rule this scenario out,” she said in the email. “If the U.S. does band with Russia, the urgency will significantly increase for Europe to step in and help Ukraine, not simply with indirect aid, but with manpower and with a new level of sanctions against Russia, including the full confiscation of its frozen assets.”

[jcnockaert@hilltimes.com](mailto:jcnockaert@hilltimes.com)  
*The Hill Times*

## NEWS

## 2025 ELECTION

# Tariffs ‘still devastating’ despite ‘reciprocal’ reprieve, says Senator on Canada-U.S. council

Neither Canada nor Mexico were among the swath of nations subject to U.S. President Donald Trump’s self-styled ‘reciprocal’ tariffs.

BY NEIL MOSS

Canadians breathed a sigh of relief as the country was spared from United States President Donald Trump’s “reciprocal” tariff announcement, but it is cold comfort with auto tariffs being enacted as the list of American levies imposed on Canada continues to grow.

A day after Trump enacted his self-titled “reciprocal” tariffs on a slew of countries around the globe, markets plunged over the trade shock, but Canada and Mexico were exempted. However, Trump announced that a 25-per-cent auto tariff would be enacted on April 3.

“It’s still devastating for the country,” said Independent Senator Hassan Yussuff (Ontario), a member of Prime Minister Mark Carney’s Council on Canada-U.S. Relations.

Still in place are a 25-per-cent all-encompassing tariff on non-Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA)-compliant goods—which drops to 10 per cent for energy—under the guise of addressing fentanyl crossing the American border, as well as

25-per-cent tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum exports.

Just hours after the auto tariffs were enacted, Stellantis announced that its plant in Windsor, Ont., would suspend operation for two weeks. Unifor, which represents workers at the plant, said around 4,500 people are employed at the facility.

“I think there is more to come in the auto sector,” Yussuff said. “That does not even speak directly to the parts manufacturers who supply these plants who are likely to see plants starting to go down.”

“Some may want to think that there is some degree of light here that we should take some comfort in, but from where I sit, this is still devastating to the country,” he said.

On April 3, Carney announced a 25-per-cent tariff on U.S. auto exports that are not compliant with the CUSMA. It remains to be seen how many vehicles that would impact. Carney suggested revenue from the counter measure could reach \$8-billion.

“Given the prospective damage to their own people, the American administration should eventually change course, but I don’t want to give false hope,” he told reporters. “The president believes what he is doing is best for the American economy—he believes it is best for American workers—and although their policy will hurt American families, until that pain becomes impossible to ignore, I don’t believe that they will change direction. So the road to that point may indeed be long, and it will be hard on Canadians just as it will be on other partners of the United States.”



Prime Minister Mark Carney announced a retaliatory tariff of 25 per cent on non-CUSMA compliant American auto exports to Canada. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Independent Senator Hassan Yussuff, a member of Prime Minister Mark Carney’s Council on Canada-U.S. Relations, says more economic pain will come after the imposition of Trump’s auto tariffs. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, pictured, called U.S. President Donald Trump’s ‘reciprocal’ tariff announcement an ‘important win’ for Canada. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre said that as prime minister he would “rapidly” renegotiate CUSMA on a “very tight timeline.”

“That will allow us to find certainty,” he said. “I will also propose that in the meantime both sides suspend tariffs.”

He said he wouldn’t remove Canadian counter-tariffs unless the U.S. did the same.

“I will push hard to end the tariff madness,” he said during a campaign rally in Kingston, Ont., on April 3.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith celebrated Trump’s April 2 announcement as an “important win” for Canada and Alberta.

“It appears the United States has decided to uphold the majority of the free trade agreement (CUSMA) between our two nations,” she posted on X, remarking that “it appears the worst of this tariff dispute is behind us (though there is still work to be done).” Smith said the focus needs to shift

to advocating to remove tariffs on autos and steel and aluminum.

## ‘I don’t understand the premier’s naiveté’: Yussuff

Yussuff said Smith’s response could be characterized as “naiveté,” remarking that non-CUSMA compliant energy exports are still being hit with tariffs.

“How can you actually say the president’s action yesterday was a win? Unless you’re completely mad and you think it’s justified what they’re doing,” he said. “It’s like saying, ‘I only lost half an arm, it could’ve been the whole thing—I should feel good.’ Well sorry, even that is unjustified and unwarranted.”

“I don’t understand the naiveté of the premier. She should be very much focused on the totality of the economy in this country because it will impact all of us. What happens in Alberta will impact Ontario, [and] what happens in Ontario will impact Alberta,” he said.

“To simply pretend that somehow because the president didn’t impose a reciprocal tariff that we should see this as some kind of partial victory, I certainly don’t see it that way because the tariffs that have already been levelled on us are quite devastating to workers and communities across the country.”

Speaking to *The Hill Times* before Carney announced Canada’s response to the American auto tariffs, Yussuff said this country needs to look at areas where it can cause “maximum pain” to “get their attention.”

In the U.S., the Senate—through the backing of Democratic and some Republican Senators—passed a resolution that would end an emergency declaration that gave Trump authority to impose tariffs on Canada, Mexico, and China under the guise of addressing the fentanyl crisis. That bill now is off to the House of Representatives, which has a slim Republican majority.

A second bipartisan bill was introduced on April 3 that could curtail Trump’s powers to impose tariffs as it is attempting to reassert Congressional jurisdiction over tariffs.

## Canada comes out ahead after ‘reciprocal’ tariff news

International trade lawyer Robert Glasgow, a partner at McCarthy Tétrault, said Canada is nowhere near the end of its tariff concerns with its southern neighbour.

“There’s going to be a lot of Canadians hurting, so you don’t want to prematurely celebrate, but I do think ... that you have to take wins when they appear,” he said, remarking that not being hit with a “reciprocal” tariff was “a win.”

He said that Canada is coming out of the situation with effectively a zero-per-cent rate on made-in-Canada items because CUSMA-compliant goods are exempt with the exception of autos and steel and aluminum.

“All the other goods that are coming into the U.S. are at least at 10 per cent, like the U.K.,” he said. “So Canada is actually coming out of this for Canadian manufactured goods in a more advantageous place than a lot of U.S. trading partners.”

While the imposition of the auto tariffs puts Canada in a bad spot, Glasgow said that “you grapple with the world as it is.”

“But, you always hesitate to talk about things as wins because we are significantly far away from being done. The auto tariffs and the steel and aluminum tariffs are still hitting Canadian producers and Canadian firms,” he said, remarking that even if this country is emerging from the White House’s “Liberation Day” comparatively better than others, the world is still headed for economic peril.

While many were telegraphing danger under a “reciprocal” American approach due to the digital services tax, that never materialized.

“The fact that we didn’t get hit despite that, quite frankly, goes back to the efforts of [Ontario Premier Doug] Ford and Carney and the Canada-U.S. consultation team that the Canadian government put together to really work to limit the impact as far as they could,” he said.

[nmoss@hilltimes.com](mailto:nmoss@hilltimes.com)

# Civil Circles

By Stephen Jeffery

2025 ELECTION



## The federal public servants running in election 2025

So far, public servants have secured nominations as Conservative, NDP, Green, People's Party, and Christian Heritage candidates, while one is running as an Independent.

Eleven federal public servants have put their hands up as candidates so far in this election, seven of them in ridings in and around the National Capital Region.

Those election candidates—all of whom have either been nominated to represent a party, or have launched a campaign as an independent—were granted permission to seek nomination or to be a candidate in a federal election by the Public Service Commission, as required under the Public Service Employment Act. Notices of the granting of permission—and of leave without pay during the election period—were published in the *Canada Gazette: Part I*.

**Kethlande Pierre**, a deputy director at the Canadian Intellectual Property Office's National Client Service Centre within Innovation, Science and Economic Development, is running under the Conservative banner in Gatineau, Que.

A recipient of the 2020 Woman of Influence Award from the Gatineau Chamber of Commerce and *Accompagnement des femmes immigrantes de l'Outaouais*, Pierre is also a recipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

According to her website's biography, she was once under the care of Quebec's youth protection service, and "now gives back as a foster parent" for the service.

The Conservatives placed third in Gatineau in 2021, behind the Bloc Québécois and winning Liberal candidate **Steven MacKinnon**.

Pierre is one of five public servants to run as Conservative candidates so far in this election: three in Quebec ridings, two in Ontario.

Fellow Quebecer **David de Repentigny**, a Border Services Officer at the Canada Border Services Agency, will contest Châteauguay-Les Jardins-de-



Public servants running in this election include Independent Elizabeth Benoit, left, the NDP's Ali Bahman, Green Amanda Rosenstock, and Conservative Kethlande Pierre. Photographs courtesy of Elizabeth Benoit, NDP, Green Party of Canada, and Conservative Party of Canada



Napierville, Que., for the blue party. On his campaign website, de Repentigny says he has worked at CBSA for 20 years, during which he has been involved in "management, health and safety, union representation, and the employee assistance program," with his commitment leading to the implementation of defibrillators at border crossings."

The Conservatives placed a distant third in the constituency then known as Châteauguay-Lacolle in 2021, behind Liberal candidate **Brenda Shanahan** and Bloc Québécois candidate **Patrick O'Hara**.

On the island of Montreal, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada employee **Néhémie Dumay** will contest Bourassa, Que., for the Conservatives. The Tories came fourth in Bourassa in 2021, with Liberal **Emmanuel Dubourg** commanding 60.4 per cent of the vote.

In Ontario, Kingston mayor **Bryan Paterson** will be the Conservative candidate in Kingston and the Islands. As an assistant professor of economics at the Royal Military College of Canada, Paterson required permission under the Public Service Employment Act to be a party nominee and an election candidate.

Kingston and the Islands has been

held by the Liberals since 1988. Incumbent MP **Mark Gerretsen** is reoffering in the 2025 election.

To the northeast, fellow Conservative candidate **Dean Wythe** will attempt to dislodge former Treasury Board president **Mona Fortier** in Ottawa-Vanier—Gloucester, Ont., a riding that has voted red at every election since 1935.

Wythe is a senior policy adviser in the regional security and defence relations division of Global Affairs Canada's International Security Policy and Strategic Affairs Bureau. The bureau co-ordinates international and defence policy with the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces, handles non-proliferation and disarmament policy, and manages Canada's membership in multilateral security and defence organizations, according to a National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians report.

According to his website biography, Wythe "has also shown a strong commitment to his community, volunteering with organizations that support Indigenous youth, Canadian Armed Forces personnel, veterans, and public servants."

As with Gatineau, the Conservatives placed third in what was then known as Ottawa-Vanier in 2021, behind Fortier and the second-place NDP.

Wythe will also run against Independent **Elizabeth Benoit**, who according to her LinkedIn profile, is currently an Assessment, Benefit, and Service Branch Employment Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion ambassador at the Canada Revenue Agency.

Benoit's website touts her experience in the federal public service: "Drawing on extensive policy experience as a Programs Leader across the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and other federal departments, Elizabeth has built a multifaceted career spanning equity initiatives and major infrastructure projects."

In the adjacent riding of Ottawa Centre, Ont., Transport Canada policy analyst **Amanda Rosenstock** is running as the Green Party candidate. Rosenstock has been working on the high frequency rail project—now a high-speed rail initiative—since February 2024.

This is Rosenstock's second election campaign. In 2021, she ran for the Green Party in Spadina-Fort York, Ont., placing fourth behind dis-endorsed Liberal **Kevin Vuong**, the NDP, and the Conservatives. The party placed in the same position in Ottawa Centre in 2021 with **Angela Keller-Herzog**, behind Liberal **Yasir Naqvi**, the NDP, and Conservatives.

The NDP has selected **Ali Bahman**, a program policy analyst at Transport Canada's Inno-

vation Centre group, as the party's candidate in the GTA riding of Vaughan-Woodbridge, Ont. Bahman's party bio notes that he has also worked at Global Affairs and National Defence.

Liberal **Francesco Sorbara** has held Vaughan-Woodbridge since it was first contested in 2015, with the Conservative candidate placing second and the NDP third in every election. Sorbara has reoffered in this election, where he will seek to retain the seat against challenges from Bahman, Conservative **Michael Guglielmin**, and the People's Party's **Roman Yevseyev**.

In Ottawa's east end, **Tafiqul Abu Mohammad** will contest Orléans, Ont., for the People's Party. An IT technical adviser at Finance Canada's Corporate Service's branch, Mohammad previously worked at CBSA, Global Affairs, and CRA. PPC came a distant fourth in the riding in 2021, achieving 2.72 per cent of the vote against the Liberal, Conservative, and NDP's double-digit turnouts.

The PPC is also turning to a public servant as its candidate in the neighbouring riding of Prescott-Russell-Cumberland, Ont.

**Deborah Perrier**, currently working at the CRA, also has more than three decades' experience as a nurse, according to her party bio.

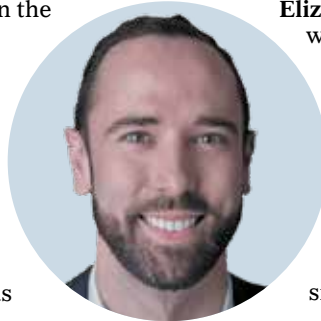
As with Orléans, the PPC came a distant fourth in the 2021 election in what was then known as Glenarry-Prescott-Russell. This time, Perrier will face off against **Giovanna Mingarelli**, who will seek to hold the riding for the Liberals following the departure of MP **Francis Drouin**; Conservative **Julie Seguin**; and NDP candidate **Ryder Finlay**.

Rounding out the public servants who have declared their candidacy so far is **Sean Mulligan**, the Christian Heritage candidate for Ottawa West-Nepean, Ont. Also the party's candidate in 2019 and 2021, Mulligan currently works for the passport division of Service Canada, according to his party bio.

*sjeffery@hilltimes.com*  
*The Hill Times*



David de Repentigny is the Conservative candidate in Châteauguay-Les Jardins-de-Napierville, Que. Photograph courtesy of the Conservative Party of Canada



Dean Wythe is the Conservative candidate in Ottawa-Vanier-Gloucester, Ont. Photograph courtesy of Conservative Party of Canada



Tafiqul Abu Mohammad is the People's Party candidate in Orléans, Ont. Photograph courtesy of People's Party of Canada



Deborah Perrier is the People's Party candidate in Prescott-Russell-Cumberland, Ont. Photograph courtesy of People's Party of Canada



Kingston Mayor Bryan Paterson is the Conservative candidate for Kingston and the Islands, Ont. Photograph courtesy of Conservative Party of Canada

# Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

2025 ELECTION

## Take two: more ex-staffers running in the federal election

There are at least 16 ex-staffers running this election—and that's not counting incumbent MPs who also previously worked in the political trenches.

The list of former staffers identified as running in this spring's federal election is growing longer, with seven more names to add to the roster.

**John Zerucelli**, who was last on the Hill as director of operations and senior adviser in then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau's** office, has been nominated as the Liberal candidate for Etobicoke North, Ont.

Zerucelli's nomination was officially announced on March 24, and he's now running to hold the riding represented by former Liberal minister

**Kirsty Duncan** since 2008. Duncan, who recently battled cancer, announced her decision not to seek re-election on March 21, writing in a statement that she was stepping back "with a heavy heart." She was re-elected in 2021 with roughly 59.6 per cent support, besting the Conservative challenger by a margin of about 34.7 percentage points.

Hailing from Etobicoke, Zerucelli has a long history of working in politics, both federally and provincially in Ontario. A one-time media and advance co-ordinator in then-Liberal prime minister **Jean Chrétien's** office, Zerucelli's CV includes time spent as a director of strategic research and policy in the Ontario Liberal caucus' services office, and as senior adviser and director of operations to then-Ontario premier **Dalton McGuinty**. Zerucelli joined Trudeau's PMO as director of operations at the end of 2015 after serving as Liberal national tour director during that year's federal election, and worked there until 2018, exiting as a senior adviser. He's been working in the private sector ever since, most recently as head of government and corporate affairs for Labatt Breweries in Toronto.



John Zerucelli, right, with then-finance minister Bill Morneau. Photograph courtesy of Twitter



Among the hundreds of Canadians vying for a seat in the House of Commons this election are at least 16 former federal staffers. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

**Neil Drabkin**, the Conservative candidate for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, Que., who recently made headlines for commenting that "People close to [United States President Donald] Trump have respect for [Conservative Leader] Pierre Poilievre," is a former federal staffer. Drabkin, who has more recently worked as a lawyer, was a cabinet chief of staff during the **Stephen Harper** government years, running the offices of then-natural resources minister **Joe Oliver**, and **Stockwell Day** as both then-public safety minister and then-Treasury Board president.

It's not Drabkin's first time running as a candidate, including in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount. He last ran in the riding in 2019, going up against then-Liberal minister **Marc Garneau**, with Drabkin coming third with roughly 11.4 per cent of the vote to Garneau's winning 56.3 per cent. The riding is currently represented by Liberal **Anna Gainey**—herself ex-staffer—who was elected with almost 50.9 per cent support in a 2023 by-election, with the Conservative candidate that race placing third with roughly 13.5 per cent support.

Jumping west, **Zach Segal**, another former Harper-era cabinet staffer, is running for the Conservatives in Richmond East-Steveston, B.C.

Segal has most recently been busy as director of BOMA



Neil Drabkin is running for the Conservatives in Montreal. Photograph courtesy of X

International, but between 2011 and 2015, he worked in various roles on Parliament Hill, including as assistant to Conservative MP **James Bezan** as then-parliamentary secretary to minister for national defence, and as press secretary to then-transport minister **Lisa Raitt**.

Segal is looking to unseat Liberal incumbent **Parm Bains** this race. Bains was elected to the House of Commons for the first time in 2021, defeating then-Conservative incumbent **Kenny Chiu** by a margin of roughly 8.9 percentage points.

**Ashley Fearnall**, who until recently was director of human resources in the Liberal research bureau on the Hill, has put her name forward as the party's candidate for Parkland, Alta.

Fearnall also previously worked in Trudeau's PMO as an HR co-ordinator for a little more than a year and a half, between the start of 2022 and the fall of 2023. She's also since been office manager to then-heritage minister **Pascale St-Onge**.

Fearnall will be going up against Conservative incumbent **Dane Lloyd**—who himself is a past Harper-era cabinet staffer—in the reconstituted riding.

Lloyd has represented Sturgeon

River-Parkland, Alta., since a 2017 by-election; the southern end of that now-former riding has been absorbed into Parkland, but makes up only a small portion of the new district—its eastern-most tip—the majority of which is territory previously in the riding of Yellowhead, Alta. A long-time conservative-held riding, now-former Conservative MP **Gerald Soroka** was re-elected in Yellowhead in 2021 with 66.2 per cent of the vote, besting the second-place People's Party candidate by a margin of roughly 53.5 percentage points. Lloyd was last re-elected with 61.6 per cent of the vote, top-



Ashley Fearnall is the Liberal candidate for Parkland, Alta. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

ping the second-place NDP candidate by a margin of about 42.7 percentage points.

Two ex-staffers are running for the Liberals in ridings in Regina: **Mac Hird**, who's the party's candidate for Regina-Lewvan, Sask., and **Rahima Mian**, who's going up against former Conservative leader **Andrew**

**Scheer** in Regina-Qu'Appelle, Sask.

Hird worked for the Liberal government between 2016 and 2021, starting as a policy analyst to then-public safety minister **Ralph Goodale**, a former Regina MP on whose 2015 re-election campaign Hird volunteered. Hird went on to work in the ministers' regional office—one of 16 such offices across Canada which support all of cabinet—in Regina, and later joined Trudeau's PMO as a Prairies and North regional

adviser. He was last on the Hill as director of policy to then-special representative for the Prairies **Jim Carr**.

Conservative incumbent **Warren Steinley** is seeking re-election in Regina-Lewvan, having won in 2021 with roughly 46.8 per cent of the vote, besting the NDP challenger by about 12.3 percentage points.

Up until this past fall, Mian was president of the University of Regina Young Liberals. She interned in Trudeau's PMO over the summer of 2024, and subsequently joined Indigenous Services Minister **Patty Hajdu's** office as a regional adviser for Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Scheer was re-elected in 2021 with 61.9 per cent support, with the NDP candidate in that race coming second with 20.9 per cent of the vote.

Jumping to Brandon-Souris, Man., Conservative candidate **Grant Jackson** may have most recently been a member of the province's legislative assembly—representing the provincial riding of Spruce Woods from 2023 up until his resignation last month—but before then he was a staffer.



Grant Jackson is the Conservative candidate for Brandon-Souris, Man. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Jackson was an assistant to now-former

Conservative MP **Larry Maguire**—who opted not to seek re-election this year after representing Brandon-Souris since a 2013 by-election—

between 2014 and 2019. Jackson went on to spend almost four years—up until he took his seat in the legislative assembly in 2023—working for the

Manitoba Progressive Conservative government, including as an assistant to then-justice minister **Cliff Cullen**, among other things.

Maguire was re-elected in 2021 with 59.6 per cent support, topping the NDP candidate that race by a margin of 39.1 percentage points.

Combined with the nine ex-staffers-turned-federal-candidates



Rahima Mian is running for the Liberals in Regina-Qu'Appelle, Sask. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

identified in these pages at the end of March, that makes for 16 in total—and that's not counting the incumbent MPs seeking re-election who

likewise previously worked as staff. Beyond Lloyd and Gainey, that list includes Conservatives **Adam Chambers**, **Melissa Lantsman**, **Branden Leslie**, and **Lianne Rood**, as well as Liberals **Rachel Bodayan**, and **Greg Fergus**, among others.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com  
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# 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](mailto:news@hilltimes.com) by Wednesday at noon before the Monday paper or by Friday at noon for the Wednesday paper.

## Top officials in workshop on Indigenous Peoples' prosperity across Indo-Pacific on April 8 at uOttawa



The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office and the University of Ottawa will host a workshop on 'The Prosperity of Indigenous Peoples across the Indo-Pacific.' Elder Claudette Commanda, pictured, is among some top officials taking part on April 8. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

### MONDAY, APRIL 7— SATURDAY, APRIL 26

**Latin American Film Festival**—The Group of Embassies of Latin American Countries in Canada hosts the 28<sup>th</sup> 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., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

### 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., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

### TUESDAY, APRIL 8

**Workshop: 'Indigenous Peoples' Prosperity Across the Indo-Pacific'**—The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada and the University of Ottawa host a workshop on "The Prosperity of Indigenous Peoples across the Indo-Pacific." Participants include Elder Claudette Commanda, Métis National Council president Victoria Pruden, Indigenous Languages Commissioner Ronald Ignace, Japan's Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi, New Zealand's High Commissioner Cecile Hillyer, Australia's High Commissioner Kate Logan, and Taiwan's representative Harry Tseng. 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](https://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, Toronto. Details: [cdhowe.org](https://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. Among the participants are Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow; Steve Verheul, former assistant deputy minister, Global Affairs Canada; Bea Bruske, president, Canadian Labour Congress; and Matthias Ecke, European MP, Social Democratic Party of Germany. Wednesday, April 9, to Friday, April 11, at the City Centre Delta, 101 Lyon St. N., Ottawa. Details: [broadbentinstitute.ca](https://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., Ottawa. Details: [canadastrongandfree.network](https://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., Ottawa. Details: [carleton.ca](https://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., Ottawa. Details and tickets at: [also-ottawa.org/events](https://also-ottawa.org/events).

### TUESDAY, APRIL 15

**2025 Canada Votes**—The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade hosts "2025 Canada Votes," a chance for its members to hear from local senior candidates of the major federal parties as they present their parties' positions on the important economic and business issues facing Canada. Thursday, April 15, at 7:30 a.m. PT at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, 900 W Georgia St., Vancouver, B.C. Details: [boardoftrade.com](https://boardoftrade.com).

**AMA: 'Election 2025 Countdown'**—Ipsos hosts an interactive "Ask Me Anything" live webinar examining the current popular vote and the public opinion trends impacting key election issues featuring Darrell Bricker, Global CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs; and Sean Simpson, Ipsos' senior vice president. Tuesday, April 15, at 12 p.m. ET happening online: [ipsos.com](https://ipsos.com).

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16

**Federal Candidate Meet and Greet 2025**—The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce hosts a "Federal Candidate Meet and Greet 2025," an opportunity for members to connect directly with federal candidates from across Edmonton and the surrounding region. Wednesday, April 16, at 9 a.m. MT at the World Trade Centre, 6th Floor, 9990 Jasper Ave. #600, Edmonton. Details: [business.edmontonchamber.com](https://business.edmontonchamber.com).

**Panel: 'Canada in a Changing World Order'**—Former Quebec premier Jean Charest, former Conservative cabinet minister John Baird, and former Canadian ambassadors Louise Blais and

Marc-André Blanchard will take part in a panel discussion, "Canada's risks and opportunities in a changing world order," hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Wednesday, April 16, at 11:30 a.m. ET at Le Centre Sheraton Montréal 1201 Blvd René-Lévesque W. Details: [corim.qc.ca](https://corim.qc.ca).

### TUESDAY, APRIL 22

**Mayor's Breakfast**—David Coletto, founder, chair, and CEO of Abacus Data, is the special guest at the Mayor's Breakfast, hosted by Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, the *Ottawa Business Journal*, and the Ottawa Board of Trade. Tuesday, April 22, at 7 a.m. ET Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Details: [businessottawabot.ca](https://businessottawabot.ca).

**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., Ottawa. 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](https://corim.qc.ca).

**Panel: 'Charting Canada's Arctic Future'**—Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, will take part in a panel discussion, "Charting Canada's Arctic Future," hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Other participants include Sean Boyd (Agnico Eagle), Heather Exner Poirot (Macdonald-Laurier Institute), and Jessica Shadian (Arctic360). Wednesday, April 23, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, Toronto. Details: [canadianclub.org](https://canadianclub.org).

### 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., Ottawa. 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](https://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](https://worldbank.org).

### MONDAY, APRIL 28

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

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30

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

### THURSDAY, MAY 1

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

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