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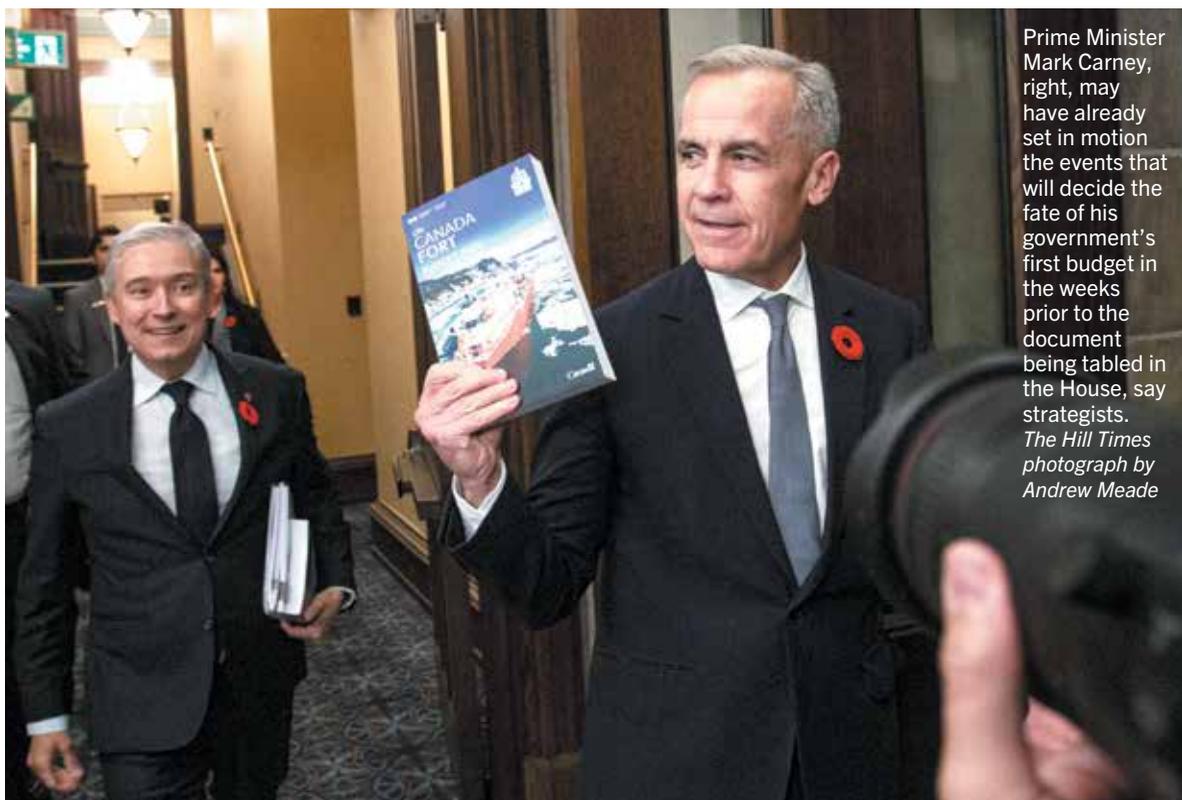
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NEWS

Liberals' 'quiet confidence' the best move as budget 'dominoes' fall with the Conservative caucus count, say politicos



Prime Minister Mark Carney, right, may have already set in motion the events that will decide the fate of his government's first budget in the weeks prior to the document being tabled in the House, say strategists. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

'If you're the Liberals, you let this play out,' and don't get in the way of any opposition mistakes that may ultimately ease the passage of the budget, says Summa Strategies' Tim Powers.

BY STUART BENSON

With the Conservatives bogged down by infighting, and the NDP seeking space to dissent without triggering an election, the Liberals' best move to ensure their budget passes next week

may be to stay out of the way, say politicos.

Former Liberal ministerial staffer Olivier Cullen called last week's "budget drama" one of the more entertaining cycles since the fall

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NEWS

'It's none of their business': Senators hit the brakes on new staff ethics code after political-disclosure rules make waves

Central to concerns is a need for staff to disclose broadly defined personal political activities, undertaken outside of work.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

A new Code of Values and Ethics for Senate Staff—developed and adopted behind closed doors last spring—caught many by surprise when it was implemented earlier this fall, and its requirement for staff to disclose their political activities has sparked concerns among both Senators and their staff.

Thanks to a motion from Conservative Senator Michael MacDonald (Cape Breton, N.S.) adopted by the Senate Internal Economy Committee (CIBA) on Oct. 23, the new Code has been put on pause pending a review and "engagement process" to be led by CIBA's Subcommittee on Human Resources.

According to MacDonald's motion, the new Code was adopted in camera on June 19. CIBA meeting minutes from that day make no mention of the policy.

The Hill Times understands the policy was first shared Senate-wide on Sept. 10—more than a week after it had gone into effect on Sept. 2. It quickly sparked questions and concerns among Senators and staff, leading to a discussion at CIBA on Oct. 2—also in camera, and also not

reflected in subsequent meeting minutes—before the entire Code was put on pause on Oct. 23.

Neither the new Code of Values and Ethics, nor the existing Conflict of Interest Code for Persons Employed by the Senate are publicly available. Only the latter was made available to *The Hill Times*.

Along with a lack of consultation, central to concerns is the Code's introduction of a new mandatory requirement for Senators' staff to detail and disclose their political activities in an annual form to be filed with the Senate administration. Staff would also be required to get their Senators' approval to undertake certain activities.

Unlike in the House, where MPs are the direct employers of their own staff, Senators' staff—though managed by, and hired or fired at the direction of Senators—are legally employees of the Senate.

Conservative Senator Denise Batters (Saskatchewan) has been a vocal critic of the new policy since it was shared Senate-wide. She told *The Hill Times* that, after CIBA's Oct. 2 meeting, Senators were informed implementation of the new disclosure requirement was on hold, but that the rest of the new Code was in effect. That led to confusion, prompting MacDonald's motion.

In presenting his motion on Oct. 23, MacDonald said because decisions have been made in camera, it's been "very difficult for anyone who didn't participate in those meetings to get answers to their questions."

Reading from the Code's definition, Batters said political activity "excludes voting in an

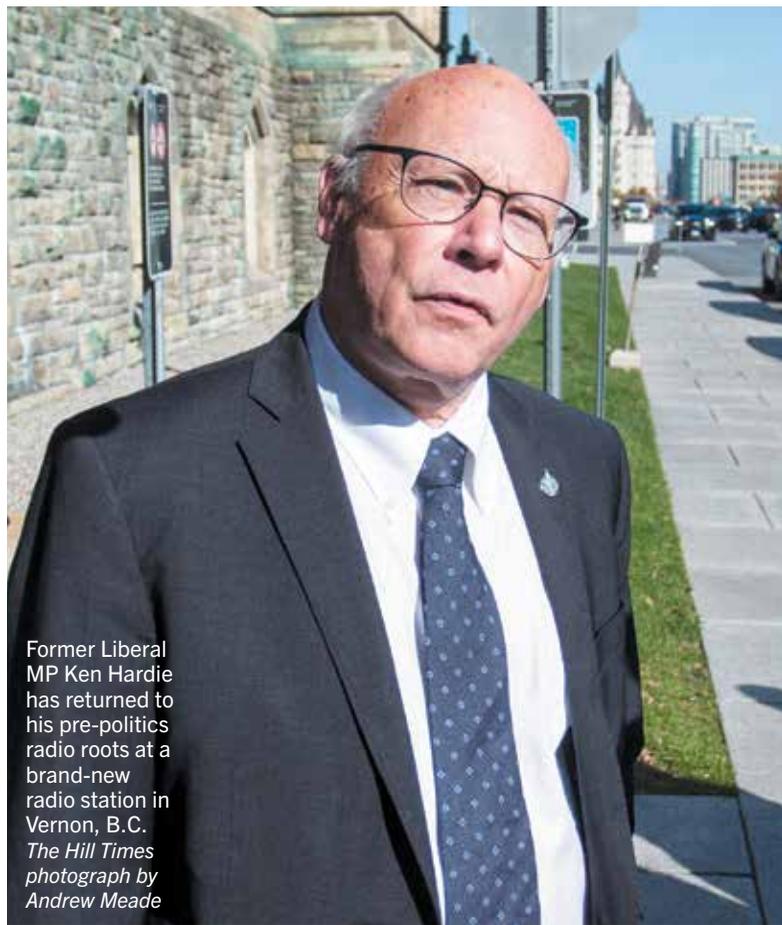
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Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

Former Liberal MP Ken Hardie is back on the air in B.C.



Former Liberal MP Ken Hardie has returned to his pre-politics radio roots at a brand-new radio station in Vernon, B.C. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

After a decade taking questions from reporters on the Hill, former Liberal MP **Ken Hardie** is back behind the mic at a brand new radio station in Vernon, B.C.

“Our call letters are CFAV (97.9 FM locally), but we’re presenting ourselves as ‘Valley FM’” Hardie told **Heard on the Hill** by email last week.

A broadcaster early in his career before being elected in 2015 to represent Fleetwood–Port Kells, B.C., Hardie said he first got involved with Valley FM in 2022 when his old radio colleague **Gord Leighton** was busy laying the groundwork for the station, which finally marked its on-air date on Nov. 1.

“Unfortunately, Gord passed away a couple of years ago, and nobody else locally had the radio background to move the project forward, so I took an increasing role in navigating the station’s development, and by the time I retired as an MP on election day

in April this year, I was president of the society,” Hardie told **HOH**.

In addition to this leadership role, Hardie is also hosting a weekly hour-long program titled ‘VIP’: *Very Interesting People*, which airs Saturday mornings. “It will feature long-form interviews covering political, social, economic and cultural issues,” he said. The inaugural episode focused on immigration, while the latest one examined the federal budget, as well as the shifting dynamics of the Canada-U.S. relationship.

“Future programs will offer time to our MP [Liberal **Gurbux Saini**] and MLA [BC New Democrat **Harwinder Sandhu**], as well as municipal leaders in our region’s municipalities,” Hardie teased, noting that for him, “getting back into radio neatly ties the string around a bundle of career experiences” that have equipped him with a vast Rolodex of very interesting people to invite on his show.

Boudreau, d’Entremont co-lead Acadian group on the Hill



The Association of Acadian Parliamentarians elected ISG Senator Victor Boudreau, left, and Liberal MP Chris d’Entremont as its co-leaders last week. *The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade and Stuart Benson*

One year since its creation, Canada’s Association of Acadian Parliamentarians voted in its first executive committee last week, co-led by recent headline-making MP **Chris d’Entremont**.

The newly Liberal MP, who crossed the floor from the Conservatives on Nov. 4, will lead the group together with Independent New Brunswick Senator **Victor Boudreau**.

The rest of the leadership team includes New Brunswick Liberal MP **Ginette Petitpas**

and Nova Scotia CSG Senator **Réjean Aucoin** as co-vice-presidents, with three director roles being filled by Conservative Senator **Rose-May Poirier**, New Brunswick Liberal MP **Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault**, and former Bloc Québécois MP **Stéphane Bergeron** (who didn’t reoffer this past federal election).

The group’s members—which includes 26 current and two former parliamentarians—voted on the executive team on Nov. 5.

Janice Charette joins Business Council of Canada

Former two-time Privy Council clerk **Janice Charette** has joined the Business Council of Canada as a senior strategic adviser.

“Her knowledge of the machinery of government, intergovernmental relations, and public-sector transformation will support our ongoing mission to pro-



Janice Charette in 2023. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

mote policies that foster economic growth, competitiveness, and shared prosperity for all Canadians,” BCC’s president and CEO **Goldy Hyder** said of Charette.

A career civil servant and former Canadian high commissioner to the United Kingdom, Charette officially retired in 2023.

Ralph Goodale is a free man in London

Canada’s current high commissioner to the United Kingdom **Ralph Goodale** was presented with the “Freedom of the City of London” at a ceremony in the British capital on Oct. 29.

The former Liberal cabinet minister turned diplomat was nominated for the honour by City of London Corporation policy chairman **Chris Hayward**. “Goodale’s extraordinary contribution to bilateral relations has seen trade and security co-operation flourish,” Hayward said on social media that day, calling him “a long-standing and trusted friend.”

Following an archaic ceremony in the Chamberlain’s Court at Guildhall, Goodale was presented with a beautifully inscribed parchment copy of the Freedom featuring the “Rules for the Conduct of Life,” which date from the mid-18th century.

“Today most of the practical reasons for obtaining the



Canada’s envoy to the United Kingdom **Ralph Goodale** received the ‘Freedom of the City of London’ on Oct. 29. *Photograph courtesy of X*

Freedom of the City have disappeared,” reads the City of London’s website about the honour. “It nevertheless remains as a unique part of London’s history to which many people who have lived or worked in the City have been proud to be admitted.”

Appointed to lead the high commission in London in 2021, Goodale’s term is expected to wrap up soon.

Sky News Africa reporter to speak in Ottawa on Nov. 13

Award-winning Sudanese-British journalist **Yusra Elbagir** will be in Ottawa on Nov. 13 to give this year’s **Peter Stursberg Foreign Correspondents Lecture**.

Hosted by Carleton University, Elbagir’s presentation is titled “Human reporting from Sudan and beyond—a remedy for selective empathy?” which will be moderated by CBC Radio host **Nahlah Ayed**.

Elbagir is Sky News’ Africa correspondent. In addition to covering major events and stories across the continent, her reports from the frontline of Sudan’s war have uncovered the scale of devastation in the world’s biggest humanitarian crisis. Her CV includes reporting for Channel 4 News, the *Financial Times*, and as international correspondent for *Vice News* on HBO.

Nov. 21 deadline to RSVP for press gallery children’s Christmas party

Members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery are invited to bring their young children to the annual Children’s Christmas Party on Dec. 6.

This festive event will take place in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building’s main party space, Room 100. As is tradition, the lunchtime menu will feature pizza and hot dogs.

As **HOH**’s own offspring have since aged out of the party’s main demographic (those aged 10 and younger are welcome), two newsroom colleagues shared their impressions of the gathering.

The Lobby Monitor’s **Hunter Cresswell** and his family attended for the first time last year. He described the party as “killer! The food ruled, my kids got presents from **Santa** (which were waaaay nicer than I expected), and the entertainment was excellent,” noting his eldest child “kept the balloon animal artist very busy.” The Cresswells will “definitely” go again.

This will be the third year in a row that *Parliament Now* editor **Katie Schultz** and her daughter **Romi** will have attended what she describes as a “fun” and “fancy” party. Schultz told **HOH** her first-grader “can’t remember to clean her room, but she can remember the magic show from last year,” and is looking forward to it.

The press gallery is encouraging partygoers to bring a donation of non-perishable food items for the Press Gallery Food Basket. “In addition, this year, the Press Gallery will be accepting gifts for less fortunate children,” reads the invitation sent out to PPG members on Nov. 5.

PPG members have until Nov. 21 to RSVP.

cleadlay@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

COMMENT

Is our military ready to be a half a million strong?

Before looking to enlist hundreds of thousands more soldiers, the CAF needs to start taking proper care of those already in uniform.

Scott Taylor



Inside Defence

OTTAWA—As a close follower of all things relating to the state of the Canadian Armed Forces, it would be an understatement to say I was shocked by a recent *Ottawa Citizen* headline that read, “Canadian military wants mobilization plan in place to boost reserves to 400,000 personnel.”



Chief of Defence Staff General Jennie Carignan recently told MPs that the Canadian Armed Forces is on track to recruit 7,000 personnel this fiscal year, writes Scott Taylor. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The clarifying subhead helped to explain why I found this story so startling: “The Canadian Forces has established a ‘tiger team’ to look at how such a

massive influx can be achieved, as the current reserve strength stands at 28,000.”

That would entail a whopping 13-fold increase in reservists from

the current, woefully under-strength military reserve force.

Should the regular force remain at its current authorized strength of 75,000, it would put

nearly a half a million Canadians into a military uniform for the first time since the Second World War.

To put this in perspective, for the past decade, the CAF has faced a personnel shortfall crisis wherein recruiting and training has failed to keep pace with the number of trained service members taking their release from the military. Out of a combined regular and reserve authorized strength of 105,000, there are currently an estimated 14,500 vacancies in the CAF. The reason the combined number is used is that many reservists have been called up to full-time contracts to fill in crucial vacancies in the regular force.

At a recent House National Defence Committee hearing, Chief of Defence Staff General Jennie Carignan reported that the Canadian Armed Forces is on track to recruit 7,000 personnel this fiscal year. While that is a higher number of recruits processed than in recent years, it barely keeps pace with those taking their release.

It certainly will not address the gaping 14,500 vacancies in the short term.

In fact, it was not expected that the CAF could return to its current authorized strength until 2035. Now we learn that there is a plan afoot to balloon the reserves to 100,000 primary personnel, and an additional 300,000 supplementary reservists.

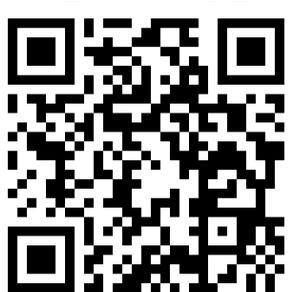
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COMMENT

Can anyone in Canada capitalize on the Mamdani effect?

The NDP and Conservatives both seem to be lacking the political acumen needed to cash in on voters desperate for a response to the cost-of-living crisis.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



OTTAWA—Woke won. For the first time in a decade, many were hope-scrolling.

On Nov. 4, New York City elected its first Muslim and South Asian mayor, Zohran Mamdani. Mamdani, who is a self-proclaimed democratic socialist, dog-walked the former New York governor, independent Andrew Cuomo, and Republican nominee Curtis Sliwa. The mayor-elect collected 50.4 per cent of the total vote, which was the first campaign that received more than a million votes since 1969; more than two million people turned out, which was the largest since that same year. Finally, people had something to vote for instead of against.

Mamdani won in the same communities that voted for United States President Donald Trump in the 2024 election. Analysis by *Gothamist* revealed that “Mamdani won 30 per cent of the primary election districts Trump won in the 2024 general election.” Specifically, *UnHerd* points out that he won “clear majorities of both Latino and Black voters, especially in the working-class enclaves of the Bronx and Queens.” These two groups supported Cuomo in the primary, but flipped to Mamdani in the general election.

In fact, Mamdani built a new coalition: youth, the working-class, and immigrants. He won 18- to 44-year-olds (69 per cent) across all racial demographics. Most notably, young women aged 18 to 29 powered his victory, captured by 82 per cent of that demographic. Not only did he do well with the working class—especially working-class voters of colour—he captured college graduates (57 per cent). This coalition stretches across class, race, and gender—the triumvirate of discrimination—to create one of the most diverse bases of support.

Evidently, diversity is a winner. You don’t say.

How did Mamdani achieve this? He addressed voters’ direct needs of afford-



New York City mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani gave people something to vote for. Canadian politicians should take notes, writes Erica Ifill. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

ability with a clear, concise, and resonant message. Fifty per cent of households cannot cover their basic needs, according to research conducted by the United Way of New York City. A lot of people are one paycheque away from living on the streets. To ease the effects of the cost-of-living crisis, Mamdani proposed a rent freeze, better tenant protections, free buses and health care, and raising the minimum wage. He spoke directly to the expenses that crush working families and the young alike. He intends to pay for it by raising taxes on corporations and the one per cent.

Although it is a very progressive agenda, the NYC mayoral race should teach the Conservatives that the more they move to the right, the smaller the voter base becomes. The ceiling for grievance politics is low in Canada. Attacking diversity, equity, and inclusion; identity politics; and “woke ideology” tends to turn off people who were open to listening to your ideas. The Conservatives have intentionally pandered to a more extreme right wing that does not allow for diversity, which means the Conservatives have enclaves of support, but not a broad coalition that can spread nationally and amongst diverse groups. They shot themselves in the foot by gleefully alienating voters they could have secured by focusing on the affordability crisis. It’s costly to be bitter and bigoted.

The NDP should take notes. After this year’s general election, Environics conducted exit polling and found that “the issue most likely to be mentioned as most important by voters is the economy or the cost of living (25 per cent).” Like the Democrats, the NDP alienated their working-class roots so much so they trailed the Conservatives in that demographic. Conservative voters were more likely than Liberals to prioritize affordability. NDP voters, however, disappeared and decimated the party’s representation in Parliament.

Mamdani’s charisma and ease of belonging no matter which community he visited is a byproduct of his political talents. He was not only able to use social media effectively to spread his message, but he also did so in a cheeky and self-assured way. His confidence was evident *sans* arrogance; he’s young and energetic, and can reach different people; he looks like a guy you can hang out with who would never kill the vibe. In Canada, neither the Conservatives nor the NDP chose leaders with that kind of political talent to inspire the electorate. Mamdani, however, emitted an energy that indicated he would fight for the average person, and although the NDP says the same, no one can take them seriously. *The Walrus* noted: “The lesson of the vanishing votes for Canada’s leading social democratic party is the same. People don’t believe that anyone will show up for them anymore.” They also don’t believe there’s a brighter future for them or their children. These social and economic headwinds inject helplessness into the populous, which can turn to anger very quickly. It is the tepid response from all parties to the cost-of-living crisis that will upend democracy.

Erica Ifill is host of the Bad+Bitchy podcast. *The Hill Times*

Poilievre and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad week

The Conservatives did everything the wrong way in dealing with Chris d’Entremont’s floor crossing, handing their political opponents a win.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—Last week was an awful one for the Conservative Party. It should have been a time when Leader Pierre Poilievre and his team were critiquing Prime Minister Mark Carney’s first budget and laying out alternatives. Instead, they spent most of the week answering questions about Poilievre’s leadership as one of his Members of Parliament crossed the floor and joined the Liberals on budget day, and two days later, another one announced his intention to resign his seat.

Rumours carried into the weekend that even more Conservatives could be contemplating changing their status. As of the time of writing, none have done so. It will be a worrisome week though for the Opposition Leader’s Office as MPs are now at home in their ridings and mostly free of Ottawa-based peer pressure or intimidation.

Chris d’Entremont, the erstwhile Nova Scotia Conservative MP who joined the Liberals, was absolutely brutalized in the public commentary by acolytes and loyalists of the Conservative leader after his decision became known. The partisan side that loses a team member never copes well with the departure. The emotional release can be pretty hysterical, as witnessed last week. However, it was not helpful to Poilievre’s reputation to have that nastiness on such prominent public display and left unchecked after d’Entremont bid the Conservatives adieu.

Some people around the leader might be confusing being nasty and spiteful as a sign of toughness—it surely is not. It is juvenile and weak-minded.

Along with the attack on d’Entremont’s character and motivations by those in official Conservative circles, many of the par-

ty’s online allies and advocates once again launched into variations of the debate as to what is modern conservatism, who fits, and who doesn’t. That, quite frankly, is the talk of losers or those advancing losing propositions.

Whenever conservatives have formed governments at the federal level in Canada, it has been done by bringing groups together, not tossing people overboard. Trust me, I have the scars to prove it. Equally, as former Progressive Conservative prime minister Joe Clark would attest, I have been young, impatient, and quite certain of the best path. So, I get restlessness and falsely placed confidence. But it’s better to be governed by the knowledge gained through history, and not the bravado of the moment, or—in the case of the current times—who can generate the most outlandish clickbait material.

D’Entremont alleged in a weekend interview with the CBC that two members of Poilievre’s leadership team aggressively—almost in an intimidating manner—tried to bully him into staying in the Conservative caucus. He also suggested the

top leaders of the team govern as if they were in a frat house.

Instead of having Poilievre’s online army push out alternative theories to what happened to d’Entremont, discount what was said because it was reported by the CBC, and have his spokespeople again take a swipe at the MP, perhaps they should take a breath. Any other organization where a former employee made such allegations would at least look into them. Maybe Poilievre is, but it doesn’t seem to be the normal course of action.

It appears as though the Conservatives did everything the wrong way in dealing with d’Entremont’s decision to cross the floor. They handed

their political opponents a win because almost every bit of public behaviour from Conservatives surrounding d’Entremont’s departure played to the leader’s negative public perception. Mean. Brutish. Short-sighted.

The Conservatives might be at their most vulnerable since Poilievre became leader. They really have no one to blame but themselves. It can be fixed, but the leader and his team need to want to be better.

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



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre and his team need to want to be better to overcome the vulnerability exposed last week, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The unintended consequences of stricter rules on public policy engagement

The 2023 changes to the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct around event sponsorship risk undermining public trust in our democratic institutions.

Jacques J.M. Shore
& Suzanne Sabourin



Opinion

As Canada navigates significant geopolitical and economic shifts, it is more important than ever for stakeholders to engage meaningfully with government. Whether advocating for new policies, regulatory reform, funding, or infrastructure priorities, transparent and accountable advocacy is essential to maintaining public trust in our democratic institutions.

However, the 2023 amendments to the federal Lobbyists' Code of Conduct risk undermining that trust. Restrictions on gifts and hospitality—capping individual instances of gifts or hospitality at \$40, and annual totals at \$200 per public office holder—may appear to promote integrity but will likely inadvertently stifle legitimate engagement at a time when greater discussion with government is needed.

The Code equates sponsorship with gift-giving or hospitality, meaning that an organization's decision to sponsor an event with public office holders in attendance is treated as equivalent to buying a public office holder a meal at a restaurant, or sending a gift to their office. This structure will deter active dialogue at public events such as conferences, workshops, or roundtable discussions where public officials and stakeholders engage in sharing views and ideas. Rather than curbing "undue influence," which is the purported intention of the rules, such restrictions risk limiting access to diverse perspectives and ultimately reducing transparency.

Contrary to perhaps popular perception, sponsorship is not about lavish perks, extravagant meals, and luxury trips to reach backroom deals. It funds vital public forums for serious open dialogue—conferences, workshops, and roundtables where government officials, academics, industry leaders, and community advocates openly exchange ideas, debate policies, and develop solutions—often in full public view.

Tighter rules disproportionately affect non-profit organizations, professional associations, and community coalitions, many of which rely on sponsorship funding to host annual conferences, information sessions, or training events. These groups bring diverse voices—rural, regional, Indigenous, and sectoral perspectives—into policy discussions. Without sponsorship support, many such organizations would be unable to hold events that connect them with government, resulting in a narrower, less-inclusive, poorly informed policy conversation. Assuming every sponsorship is a backdoor for influence undermines trust. Tightening sponsorship rules risks less informed policy development.



Sponsorship funds vital public forums for serious open dialogue often in full public view, write Jacques Shore and Suzanne Sabourin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Canada has one of the world's most robust lobbying frameworks, with mandatory registration and public reporting. Tightening sponsorship rules won't eliminate improper influence over government decision-making—it will simply drive it away from more active public fora and potential scrutiny. As once noted by Jacques Shore, "One cannot develop good public policy from the back end of a dark cave." The right approach is disclosure, achieved through reasonable and clear standards, and avoiding restrictions on legitimate engagement disclosed within straightforward guidelines. To do otherwise, assumes that either public office holders or those dealing with government officials lack integrity.

Modern policymaking requires and relies on collaboration across sectors. Whether addressing climate transition, the nuclear renaissance, diversified trade, digital governance, or mental health reform, government needs input from experts, researchers, and practitioners. Conferences, workshops, and public dialogues—

often supported by sponsorships—are where these exchanges occur. Eliminating such events deprives public office holders and policymakers of diverse expertise and fresh ideas, making policymakers more insulated and less inclined to take overt steps to learn from others due to time pressures. The result is the passage of regulations that are less practical, potentially harmful overall, and ineffective.

Restricting sponsorship-related initiatives stifles innovative dialogue and creates an absence of conversations necessary for governments to appreciate, address, and adapt to new challenges at a time when Canada most needs those efforts. Rather than discouraging participation, regulators must ensure that visible, accountable, and accessible information-sharing remains the primary goal of rules governing government advocacy. For democracy to thrive, open conversations and exchange of information is essential. Treating dialogue as suspicious or dangerous leads to poorly informed policymaking and less responsive programs.

Canada has been a global leader in achieving the right balance between strict ethics rules and meaningful engagement in advocacy. Building on this legacy requires resolving definitional ambiguities around what constitutes a "sponsorship." For example, does it include funds for advertising at events, financial support or contributions for government-hosted events, providing food and refreshments, or funding scholarships, enabling travel for trip visits, and research partnerships? Uncertainty in these areas has dampened legitimate engagement.

To keep the process of advocacy and information sharing open, accountable, transparent, and valuable, without silencing legitimate voices, several practical steps are suggested. To begin, clarify the meaning of a "sponsorship" under the Lobbying Act. Exclude public conferences and workshops from the Act's application. These events should qualify as matters of public record within the meaning of paragraph 4(2)(a) of the Act. Reinforce conflict-of-interest rules for public office holders attending sponsored events. Lastly, clarify the meaning and application of "oral and arranged" communications with public office holders, particularly in the context of public events, conferences, and workshops.

Updating the Act is needed so Canadians can engage fully while still achieving the transparency and disclosures required, thereby enhancing our democratic traditions and the role of our government. Effective public policy can certainly be made in the open air of a green field under a sunny blue sky that stimulates broad discussion for good and inspired decision-making. Isn't that what our Parliament justifiably expects?

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

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NEWS

Potential PCO intelligence cuts ‘counterintuitive and risky,’ say national security experts

The government’s effort to find savings by scrapping duplication risks undermining the country’s limited analytical capacity, says Stephanie Carvin.

BY STUART BENSON

National security and intelligence experts warn that suggested reductions to the Privy Council Office’s intelligence assessment capabilities as part of the government’s spending review would be a risky and “counterintuitive” decision that would only further weaken Canada’s strategic awareness.

“We undervalue intelligence in this country,” former Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) director Ward Elcock told *The Hill Times*, adding that Canada’s political culture towards intelligence gathering is a far more pressing concern than potential duplication.

As part of the Liberals’ efforts to streamline operations and government spending, the 2025 budget details how the Privy Council Office (PCO) will meet the expected 15 per cent in savings over the next three years—namely \$14.9-million in 2026-27, \$19.9-million in 2027-28, and \$29.8-million in 2028-29, and each fiscal year ongoing.

The budget says that PCO will “recalibrate to programming that is no longer a priority or has objectives that overlap and could be better delivered by other departments,” including the Clean Growth Office and PCO programming for Public Lands and Housing. It will also “modernize” its operations and the administration of governor-in-council appointees, and improve its processes to support cabinet committees as well as consolidate internal services.

However, it also suggests that PCO will revisit programs “where functions may be overlapping and duplicative with what is delivered by other organizations,” including “working with security partners to rationalize resources dedicated to analyzing intelligence information.”

Elcock told *The Hill Times* that the proposed cuts indicate that the undervaluing of intelligence in Canadian politics may not have improved much from the tenure of former prime minister Justin Trudeau.



Former CSIS director Ward Elcock says Canadian politicians have historically undervalued the benefit of good intelligence. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

“Historically, most Canadian politicians are far more domestically focused, and the message with Trudeau was clear that his government wasn’t particularly interested in national security,” Elcock said, adding that while Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) seems more engaged, it only makes the suggestion more curious.

“Carney is an intelligent, globally minded person, and probably more interested in intelligence briefings than his predecessor was, but without a strong national security culture, there’s always the temptation to undervalue the analytical side of intelligence,” Elcock said. “But if you don’t understand the threats or even the global context, you won’t invest in the analysis that tells you what’s coming.”

Former CSIS analyst Stephanie Carvin shares that concern,



Former CSIS analyst Stephanie Carvin says that the IAS provides more nimble and relevant briefings to the prime minister and cabinet than its CSIS counterparts. *Handout photograph*

warning that the government’s effort to eliminate duplication risks undermining the country’s limited analytical capacity rather than improving it.

Carvin explained that while the CSIS Act binds its analysts to issues of espionage, foreign interference, and terrorism, the PCO’s Intelligence Assessment Secretariat (IAS) can take a broader view—looking at economic problems, climate change, artificial intelligence, and other non-traditional threats—and report directly to cabinet or the prime minister with the flexibility to respond to the pressing issues the government is facing on any given day.

While both the IAS and CSIS would have an analyst focused on China, for example, viewing that as simply a duplication or redundancy would only reduce the government’s ability to get timely, nuanced briefings, Carvin said.

With the budget proposing spending cuts to the Privy Council Office, experts say Prime Minister Mark Carney should be expanding his access to relevant analysis rather than shrinking from the standards set by Canada’s partners. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

security and intelligence from 2015 to 2024, said the suggestion of reducing PCO’s intelligence analysis capabilities is “counterintuitive.”

“Given today’s world and all the challenges we’re facing—particularly on the national security front—it strikes me as counterintuitive that the Privy Council Office would not want a very robust intelligence analyst section,” explained Green, now a senior adviser on national security at Global Public Affairs, and a senior fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute.

Green also noted that other Five Eyes countries have well-resourced equivalents in the United Kingdom’s Joint Intelligence Committee, Australia’s Office of National Intelligence, New Zealand’s National Assessment Bureau, and the United States’ presidential daily briefs.

“Those all have sometimes legislated, but direct, lines of reporting to their prime ministers and cabinet,” Green said. “Canada shouldn’t shrink from that standard.”

Additionally, Green said the IAS has co-ordinated Five Eyes intelligence assessments, and has played an essential role in helping Canada show it was pulling its weight in that relationship.

Green explained that the IAS gathers and packages “an unbelievable amount of covert information” from CSIS, CSE, Global Affairs Canada, the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre, and the Canadian Forces Intelligence Command. He added that while there may be some overlap between the PCO’s analysts and the intelligence community, in many cases, that is necessary to provide “timely, relevant, policy-neutral” advice to the prime minister and cabinet.

“A lot of times, those are very inconvenient truths, and there’s always an uneasy marriage between the intelligence community and the political community,” Green said. “In a perfect world, it should actually inform the strategic decision-making; it’s not the be all, end all, but it’s a really, really important input. So, its independence is extraordinarily important.”

Furthermore, Green said he isn’t sure how much overlap between the IAS and other Canadian intelligence services still exists given that it had already been “thinned” by the creation of the National Security Council Secretariat and its appropriation of resources. The secretariat was formed within the PCO after the National Security Council cabinet committee was formed in 2023.

Green also said that while the budget suggests a reduction in resources for PCO intelligence analysis, he suspects that the review may discover it needs more, not less.

“Different agencies approach the same problem from different perspectives ... you want analysts who can play that challenge function, and integrate insights across departments,” Green said. “What matters is co-ordination, not cutting for the sake of optics.”

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Martin Green, a former assistant secretary to cabinet for security and intelligence, says better co-ordination between the PCO and intelligence agencies is more valuable than the optics of spending cuts. *Handout photograph*

“The other advantage is that the IAS is a central agency,” Carvin explained. “They’re in the heart of government, and they tend to be a little better connected.”

While Carvin said that the broader intelligence community has been spared the same level of reductions—faced with only finding two per cent in savings alongside the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) and the RCMP—the collective impression she took from the budget was a “doubling down on a suboptimal system.”

“The system is doing its best, and it has great people in it, but we need more than doubling down on the architecture we already have,” Carvin said. “Hiring more people isn’t the same as improving effectiveness.”

Martin Green, an assistant secretary to the cabinet for

‘Canadians deserve full confidence that public funds are protected,’ says Liberal MP after PSPC report reveals nearly a dozen employees fired for misconduct

Public Services and Procurement Canada completed 111 disciplinary investigations in the 2024-25 fiscal year, and found 84 cases of misconduct.

BY IREM KOCA

The findings of a recent departmental report on investigations into conflicts of interest, fraud, and criminal activity within Public Services and Procurement Canada demonstrate that “every public dollar is at risk until proven otherwise,” says a Liberal MP.

Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) released its first annual report looking into misconduct and wrongdoing across public servants and federal suppliers on July 4.

The department completed 111 disciplinary investigations in the 2024-25 fiscal year. Of those, 76 per cent—84 cases—were found to be substantiated cases of misconduct, and resulted in disciplinary action that ranged from 36 written reprimands to two firings.

The report also reveals that 11 public servants overall were fired as part of different investigations. One public servant was terminated due to theft, another one due administrative misconduct, while nine were fired due to the findings of PSPC’s security screenings.

Liberal MP Iqra Khalid (Mississauga–Erin Mills, Ont.), who is a member of House Government Operations and Estimates Committee studying federal procurement, said the report “reflects stronger fraud prevention, better data analytics, and faster action when misconduct is found.”

PSPC is the central purchasing agent for the government, and manages more than 19,400 employees and an \$11.5-billion annual budget.

Khalid said that the volume of investigations, cases, and tips “makes one thing clear: every public dollar is at risk until proven otherwise.”

“As [the Government Operations and Estimates Committee]



Liberal MP Iqra Khalid says the volume of investigations, cases, and tips ‘makes one thing clear: every public dollar is at risk until proven otherwise.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

continues our study on procurement reform, we will be looking for faster detection, greater transparency, and stronger controls, so the system keeps catching misconduct before Canadians pay the price,” she said.

“Canadians deserve full confidence that public funds are protected at every step. Strengthening integrity isn’t a one-year task, it’s a continuous commitment, and I am determined to keep pushing that work forward.”

Khalid was previously a member of the House Public Accounts Committee, which has also done a deep dive into procurement issues as they relate to the \$59.5-million ArriveCan procurement.

PSPC conducted “Review for Cause” investigations under its chief security officer. Sixteen personnel went through security screening, and there were nine cases that led to employees having their security clearances revoked and losing their jobs, the report says.

In one case, an employee’s laptop was seized by law enforcement during the execution of a

search warrant at their residence for illegal activity.

One public servant did not disclose that their clearance was previously revoked for theft from another government department.

In two cases, public servants used government resources—credit and travel cards—for personal purchases, and neither made any effort to pay back the government, according to the report.

One employee was found to have left their work laptop unlocked in a public location, providing potential access to sensitive information. Further investigation revealed that this public servant had not disclosed their past criminal convictions.

One employee was charged with numerous criminal offences over a short period of time, which included impaired driving, sexual assault, and mischief.

PSPC reported 42 cases of “administrative misconduct,” defined as any deliberate action where a public servant acts against the government’s rules, ethics, and codes to which they agreed when they started working for

the government. According to the report, 19 of those cases resulted in suspension while one led to termination of employment.

The internal investigations conducted by the department also revealed a total of 34 cases of “breach of values and ethics” as outlined in the Code of Conduct, which sets the standards for public servants’ behaviour in line with the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector. Those cases resulted in two oral reprimands, 15 written reprimands, and 17 suspensions, according to the report.

“Wrongdoing” as defined by the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act (PSDPA) can refer to violation of any federal or provincial law or regulation, a misuse of public funds or a public asset, or gross mismanagement in the public sector.

PSPC has faced intense scrutiny over the past two years due to a series of contracting controversies, political scrutiny, committee showdowns, scathing watchdog reports, a historic admonishment of a contractor, and multiple RCMP investigations. The department manages approximately \$60-billion every year on behalf of departments and agencies.

PSPC launched the Office of Supplier Integrity and Compliance (OSIC) in May 2024, replacing the department’s former Integrity Regime, and giving it expanded powers to take action in the absence of criminal charges.

OSIC outlines when and how a supplier can be suspended, and decisions are made by the Registrar of Ineligibility and Suspension, a senior official at the assistant deputy minister level. Currently, this position is held by Catherine Poulin, who is the assistant deputy minister of the PSPC’s Departmental Oversight Branch.

This new office completed 26,573 “integrity verifications,” and pursued seven “administrative actions” consisting of six suspensions and one supplier being declared ineligible from entering into a contract or real property agreement with the government, says the report, which did not provide further details on these cases.

PSPC’s Special Investigation and Internal Disclosure Directorate—the unit charged with probing alleged fraud—focused its efforts on fraudulent over-billing cases, the July 4 report said. “Several cases were detected

involving subcontractors working concurrently for multiple prime contractors and billing for hours that could not possibly be worked.”

PSPC has previously said it recovered \$4.1-million in nine cases where subcontractors fraudulently billed the government. The July 4 report confirms at least seven of those cases were referred to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for criminal investigation as of March 31, and that the new Restitution Unit established in 2024 has led the efforts to recover those funds. On Oct. 30, PSPC officials told MPs that another \$400,000 is being “pursued through legal actions.”

In the report, the department says it has adopted a fraud-risk management framework to prevent, detect, and respond to fraudulent activity. These efforts include using data analytics and artificial intelligence to give the department access to information such as corporate ownership structures of vendors.

The report noted PSPC ran two fraud awareness campaigns, which reached 444,000 views on social media. Visits to the Federal Contracting Fraud Tip Line web page also increased by nearly 250 per cent from the year prior, receiving 364 tips during the last fiscal year.

“With each report that follows, we will improve our ability to analyze and document the types of misconduct and wrongdoing that occur,” the report reads, noting that PSPC will track “warning signs, trends, and underlying causes” to prevent further misconduct.

According to the report, PSPC employees can make an internal disclosure of wrongdoing anonymously or otherwise as defined by the PSDPA, which protects the whistleblower. Government officials, suppliers, or members of the public can report suspicious activity such as bribery or bid-rigging to the tip line.

The department also received four internal disclosures under the PSDPA in 2024-25. While all cases went under preliminary investigation, only one has moved into the full investigation stage.

According to the report, there are currently 11 open PSDPA-related investigations, three of which are led by the public sector integrity commissioner with support from the department, and the rest are managed directly by PSPC’s Special Investigations and Internal Disclosure Directorate. The cases involve seven allegations of conflict of interest, two cases of misuse of public funds, and two relate to gross mismanagement.

The department highlighted a series of actions it has taken to strengthen integrity and accountability of federal contracting, but noted in the report that there are inherent risks of misconduct.

“We recognize that despite our efforts, the risk of misconduct will always be present across our business lines,” the department said. “However, we remain committed to ensuring the integrity of the government’s procurement and real property systems, as well as the PSPC workforce.”

ikoca@hilltimes.com
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DELIVERY INQUIRIES

circulation@hilltimes.com
 613-688-8821

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Editorial

Editorial

Anti-d'Entremont diatribes unbecoming of purported leaders

The news out of Nova Scotia last weekend following MP Chris d'Entremont's defection across the aisle from the Conservatives to the Liberals is that the local RCMP is investigating online threats made against the politician.

"This activity has been reported to the RCMP and there's an open, ongoing investigation. We're unable to comment on operational details related to protective measures," Allison Gerrard, a communications adviser for the RCMP in Nova Scotia, said in statement to *The National Post*.

Conservatives say they're the rule-of-law party, wanting harsher sentences and justice-related policies. But somehow, that is all conveniently cast aside when it comes to advancing partisan politics, whether it's reports of intimidation of their own party members, or instigating virtual mobs against female Senators or journalists.

That's not to absolve or ignore any other party or partisan who takes things too far. Former prime minister Justin Trudeau wasn't exactly known for keeping his temper when he felt challenged—with women also seeming to bear the brunt of his ire.

Party politics have nearly always been treated as some sort of blood sport, but in today's political climate—where social media has made the veil between politicians and the public incredibly thin—it's easier than ever for rage and hate to manifest into something tangible.

This is the latest example of what happens when opposing political views is treated not merely as a disagreement over ideas and ideology, but rather as an all-out "us versus them" or "good versus evil" battle.

The kinds of fights that should be reserved for the actual removal of rights and civil liberties (because those can never be treated as simple ideological differences based on party colour) are being had over someone daring to change their mind about which party they support—something a myriad of Canadians do every time they visit the ballot box.

Instead of a response expressing disappointment over d'Entremont's departure and reinforcing the perfectly reasonable argument that, six months ago, the MP was willing to run under the Conservative banner in a general election, the official opposition office's response to the CBC was: "Chris d'Entremont, who established himself a liar after wilfully deceiving his voters, friends and colleagues because he was upset he didn't get his coveted deputy speaker role, is now spinning more lies after crossing the floor. He will fit in perfectly in the Liberal caucus."

And this followed days of d'Entremont's former caucus mates calling him everything but a child of God when appearing in front of a reporter's recorder or camera.

As of writing, there hasn't been even a token social media comment from the leader's account condemning the threats against d'Entremont that the RCMP are now investigating.

It's understandable that people are hurt, and feeling betrayed. But MPs are elected to be leaders. And if this is the behaviour they're modelling, then it's a losing battle against any other societal misbehaviour they're seeking to stamp out.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Canadians deserve to know the names of all the nation's fallen, says N.S. reader

On Nov. 11, Canadians honoured the terrible sacrifices made by the nation's living and departed veterans. This remembrance ought to include all military casualties rather than a redacted roster.

Remembrance Day 2025 ceremonies excluded the names of elite military casualties since successive governments have been taciturn on Canada's secretive military deployments. The lone exception was the 2007 admission that a Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) commando had died while repairing a communications tower in Afghanistan.

There is an understandable hesitation to scrutinize military deployments when soldiers are being killed and wounded on overseas missions. Since military members are discouraged from questioning orders, civilians must do so on their behalf, lest more lives be spent for the political and financial gain of those issuing commands and profiting from military adventurism.

Canada's recent governments have increased both the size and budgets of elite units like JTF2 and the Special Operations Regiment as a practical and economical way to simultaneously demon-

strate Canada's military prowess and support America's global military activities.

Canada has already established military "hubs" in Germany, Kuwait, Jamaica, and Senegal. Plans for other hubs in Eastern Africa, Southeast Asia, and East Asia are pending. These bases will be the staging point for elite Canadian troops operating under United States command authority, further insulating their activities from public scrutiny and accountability.

Operational security notwithstanding, the government's opaque policy on special operations is a concern for Canadians who expect timely information about the nation's military activities.

Such transparency might enhance public discourse, and reduce the possibility of future debacles like the infamous Somalia affair in 1993 that led to the political sacrifice of Canada's highly respected Airborne Regiment.

During Remembrance Week, Canadians deserve to know the names of all the nation's fallen soldiers, not a roster cynically redacted for political purposes. Past wars have created enough unknown casualties.

**Morgan Duchesney
 Baddeck, N.S.**

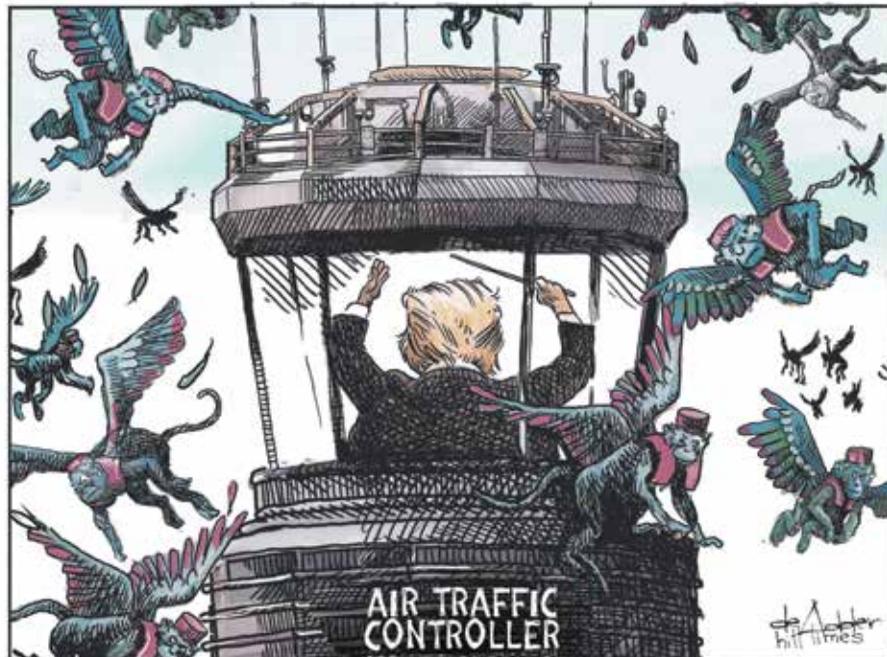
Reverse budget cuts to international aid: letter writer

It is with deep disappointment that I write this letter to address the breaking of Prime Minister Mark Carney's promise in Budget 2025. The federal budget announcement on Nov. 4 included a \$2.7-billion cut over four years to the international assistance envelope, the primary source of Canada's foreign aid funding. This decision is unacceptable, especially in the face of urgent global needs.

This is a missed chance to create a better world, and to position the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria as an essential part of Canada's leadership in global health. I urge Carney to rethink this decision, and correct this mistake by making a bold pledge to the Global Fund later this month.

Canada is not being asked for much: just 34 cents for every \$100 spent on international assistance. Yet, this small investment can change countless lives. I have seen the harsh effects of global poverty, and Canada, with its financial stability, has the ability to help. Now is the time to act, to support our global family, and to prioritize the well-being of those in need. I ask everyone reading this to think seriously about the impact of this budget cut on global poverty and preventable diseases. Access to food, care, and basic health is a human right. How have we reached a point where these essential needs are at risk? Canada has the ability to do better; we should not turn our backs on those who need us most.

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



COMMENT

Pierre Poilievre may be done

The Conservative leader has shown no inclination or ability to temper his highly polarized style, which makes his chances in the next election appear unpropitious.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



If the turmoil in Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has reached the point where MPs who might be considering defecting are getting threats to destroy their futures, as has been widely reported, it's obvious that the leader is in serious trouble, writes Les Whittington. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



OTTAWA—It wasn't clear last week whether soon-to-resign MP Matt Jeneroux would be joining his Conservative colleagues in voting against the Liberal budget in the high-stakes test in the Commons on Nov. 17.

Opposition whip Chris Warkentin told the media Jeneroux—despite his plan to leave federal politics—would still stand with the Conservatives against the budget in the final confidence vote. But Jeneroux, who did not show up for the two confidence votes last week, had not confirmed this.

Earlier, the Edmonton MP had reportedly met with Prime Minister Mark Carney as the Liberals worked to convince opposition members to cross the aisle in hopes of gaining the few seats needed to form a majority government.

But in the midst of the uproar and condemnation by Conservatives of Nova Scotia MP Chris d'Entremont for doing just that on Nov. 4, Jeneroux announced he was simply resigning altogether. He said he'd informed Warkentin

of his decision before he went public with it on Nov. 6.

In his announcement, Jeneroux didn't say exactly when he was quitting, but a bit later Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre revealed the exiting MP isn't leaving until next spring.

Then, in a sign of how things are going among the Conservatives on Parliament Hill, Jeneroux appeared to have been coerced into issuing a second statement saying he wasn't coerced in the first place. If the turmoil in Poilievre's caucus has reached the point where MPs who might be considering defecting are getting threats to destroy their futures, as has been widely reported, it's obvious that the leader is in serious trouble.

In any case, the way the dissension has burst into the public realm couldn't have been

more devastating for Poilievre. As it turned out, Canadians spent most of last week marvelling at the breakdown in Conservative caucus unity rather than dissecting Carney's overly complicated, deficit-busting budget.

This past weekend, d'Entremont discussed what it's like in Poilievre's caucus, saying, "Quite honestly, a lot of the time I felt I was part of a frat house rather than a serious political party." It was all about "what kind of fun could you have with something ... beating up on someone ... who could be the most negative ... who could be the most cutting—that kind of stuff," the 23-year political veteran told CBC News.

Plus, there was no indication over the summer that the party had learned anything from its election loss to the Liberals, he

said: "All I saw was more division, more anger."

The last straw came when, after word got out that d'Entremont was considering crossing the aisle, he found himself being yelled at by Conservative House leader Andrew Scheer and Warkentin, both of whom "barged" into his office, and let him know "how much of a snake" he was.

"It really pushed me to a point where it's like, 'OK, I guess my decision is made for sure now,'" recalled d'Entremont, who noted he had been thinking of such a switch since the April election.

In the I-rest-my-case department as far as d'Entremont is concerned, Poilievre's office sent a comment to CBC calling him a liar "who wilfully deceived his voters, friends, and colleagues."

Last week was the culmination of months of unfulfilled expect-

tations for the Conservatives, beginning with Carney's arrival on the scene and the Liberal win in the April 28 vote.

But the widely expected adjustment in Poilievre's hard-nosed, nasty MAGA-style approach after his party's shocking election loss has never materialized. He seems not to have realized that the populist, "Canada-is-broken" message that worked so well against the hated Justin Trudeau seems strikingly out of kilter at a time of national crisis in a country looking for the best in grown-up, constructive leadership.

While the Conservative party is pretty much neck and neck with the Liberals in the polls, Poilievre himself is running 22 points behind Carney in terms of preferred prime minister.

With all this in plain view, a lot of Conservative MPs must—like Jeneroux—be weighing the benefits of a career in the opposition benches.

So what's next? Although political events tend to take on a life of their own, there's no reason just now to think Poilievre will face any significant opposition within his own caucus before Christmas. And he will probably get a vote of confidence in his party's convention in the Conservative heartland of Calgary in late January. No one else among the Conservatives has emerged as a challenger.

But, given that six months have elapsed since the federal election, and Poilievre has shown no inclination or ability to adjust to the post-Trudeau world and temper his highly polarized style in a more moderate direction, his chances in the next election—whenever it's held—appear unpropitious.

And if the party realizes it can't win with him at the helm, it's just a matter of when, not whether, Poilievre's 21-year quest for the prime minister's post will be over.

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

Is our military ready to be a half a million strong?

Continued from page 3

For those not familiar with these terms, primary reserves would consist of part-time soldiers who would report to their armoured units for training on a regular basis. Historically, the supplementary reserve was a list of former regular and reserve force personnel who signed up to voluntarily return to service in the time of a national crisis.

However, following the Cold War, the Supplementary Reserve list withered on the vine. In 1995, there were roughly 47,000 personnel on the Supplementary Reserve list. But that number dropped appreciably in 2009 when contact

letters went unanswered and only 23,000 names remained active.

By the end of March 2011, that number was down to 19,000 people, and dropping fast. Current estimates put the Supplementary Reserve list at roughly 4,400.

Thus, it is puzzling that Carignan and Department of National Defence deputy minister Stephanie Beck would have hatched this ambitious plan to mobilize so many Canadians.

It also begs the question of where you would possibly find 300,000 veterans of the CAF who would be able and willing to return to service.

The initial directive to create a "tiger team" to study this mobi-

lization plan was first issued by Carignan and Beck on May 30. Apparently the team for this defence mobilization plan was stood up at the National Defence Headquarters at the Carling Campus on June 4.

No additional details were provided to *The Citizen*, and no comments were provided as to the progress made to date.

However, Carignan and Beck pointed out that their initiative would require a "whole-of-society" engagement, which means that DND will not be acting alone to achieve this lofty goal.

One clue as to where they are headed with this is an acknowledgment that the CAF team will

be consulting allies such as Finland for their expertise in maintaining large standing military reserve forces. For the record, Finland's solution is that military service is mandatory for all men, and voluntary for women.

While I am personally in favour of mandatory national service, I'm not sure how such a measure would fly given the current political climate in Canada.

That said, if Carignan and Beck's scheme does somehow come to fruition, the question then becomes: where do they plan to house all these personnel? In a recent report by the federal auditor general, DND was slammed for not addressing the housing crisis for military personnel. Not only is the quantity insufficient—it is estimated that there is a shortfall of some 3,700 housing units—but the quality is also lacking.

Among the deficiencies noted by the auditor general, it was found that there were 227 high-priority repairs required

across 32 DND residential buildings, with only five per cent of those repairs being addressed. Other faults such as a lack of safe drinking water, lack of WiFi, and communal showers rather than individual stalls were all noted in the AG's report.

This is not a new development. The average age of DND accommodation infrastructure is 60 years, and a lack of foresight and investment in maintenance has led to the present mess.

If there is a silver lining to the CAF's personnel shortfall crisis, it's that if the ranks were actually fully staffed, thousands more accommodation units would already be required.

Before looking to enlist hundreds of thousands more soldiers, the CAF needs to start taking proper care of those already in uniform.

Scott Taylor is the editor and publisher of Esprit de Corps magazine.
The Hill Times

COMMENT

PQ *Blue Book* attacks Canada's international role

The foreign policy document is part of the Parti Québécois leader's meticulous deconstruction of Canada.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—Paul St-Pierre Plamondon is at it again. Last week, the Parti Québécois leader and presumed next premier of Quebec rolled out his *Livre Bleu* (*Blue Book*) on an independent Quebec's international role.

There was a certain *chutzpah* in the launch: it was undertaken in the same room in Quebec City's famed hotel—the Château Frontenac—where then-United Kingdom prime minister Winston Churchill, then-American president Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and then-Canadian prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King met in August of 1943 and September of 1944.

St-Pierre Plamondon's event also took place two days after the federal budget, in which Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne cut spending of Global Affairs Canada by \$561-million, and reduced international aid by \$2.7-billion over four years.

This provided an opportunity for St-Pierre Plamondon to portray Canada as a weak country on the international stage, and not a "shield" from the United States of Donald Trump. "An independent Quebec would greatly benefit from having direct relations with our neighbours to the south, rather than being drowned out in a cacophony of provinces and a federal state that no longer knows where to turn," he said. He noted the budget for Global Affairs is close to \$9-billion, with Quebec's share \$2-billion, "money we pay for representation that too often works against our interests."

He outlined his vision for Quebec as a country of nine million people: "Quebec would rank exactly in the middle of the list of countries in the world ... it is clear that countries the size of Quebec are among those that succeed best on the international stage ... [like] Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland." This presumes there would be no exodus from Quebec, and its fiscal capacity would remain the same. PSPP, as he is known, studied in Denmark and Sweden, and is fond of comparing Quebec to influential Scandinavian countries.

St-Pierre Plamondon laid out his plans for what would follow the presumed election of the PQ in October of 2026: first, he would double the number of Quebec delegations abroad from 19 to 38. He listed Vietnam, the Netherlands,

South Africa, Ireland, Switzerland, and Cameroon as prospects. Following a successful separation referendum, each of these delegations would become embassies lobbying for immediate international recognition. Of the more than 4,000 treaties Canada has with the world, the PQ leader promises they will be easily renegotiated.

Once premier, St-Pierre Plamondon said he would also write to every international sports federation to request Quebec's presence with an international team, especially in hockey. This seemingly superfluous gesture has an ulterior motive: to create a greater sense of nationalism among the average Quebecer, and give the province a higher international profile.

He confided he has spoken to several "high-profile" Quebec athletes who want to represent the province on the world stage, and he virtually rubbed his hands with glee as he said, "Imagine what it will be like when Team Quebec beats Team Canada at hockey?" The first bench-clearing brawl between the two teams would be a PR "coup" for the separatists.

The foreign policy document is part of St-Pierre Plamondon's meticulous deconstruction of Canada in response to a Quebec public—according to polls—overwhelmingly not interested in a referendum on independence, nor of becoming a separate country.

Nonetheless, he continues to prepare the path. Step by step, he has set out a budget for the first year of independence, denounced the Canadian Constitution, called Canada's history "colonial," and its laws "illegitimate." In this document, he declares, "We are a stable partner and less arrogant than Canada." All this is aimed at ensuring a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) for international recognition, bypassing Parliament, the provinces, and the Clarity Act.

Of course, much of this is fantasy: the disruption of a "Oui" in a referendum would be profound; a UDI more so. The departure of companies and hundreds of thousands of people with means would reduce revenues and fiscal capacity. The Cree and the Inuit would demand Northern Quebec remain in Canada. In this scenario, St-Pierre Plamondon's promise of Quebec being "stable" and having a role as an "international mediator" falls flat.

I hope there are people in the Privy Council Office and the Prime Minister's Office who are doing the necessary groundwork at home and with our missions abroad to counter his efforts. Because St-Pierre Plamondon is serious, intelligent, and determined to get his way.

Andrew Caddell is retired from Global Affairs Canada, where he was a senior policy adviser. He previously worked as an adviser to Liberal governments. He is a former town councillor in Kamouraska, Que. He can be reached at pipson52@hotmail.com.

The Hill Times

OPINION

A true conservative party fought its last election 25 years ago



After the merger of the Progressive Conservative and Canadian Alliance parties, then-leader Stephen Harper took control of the Conservative brand and eliminated a historical institution that had stood in their way, writes Michael Huenefeld. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

Any society needs both moderate conservatism and moderate liberalism to develop in a balanced way.

Michael Huenefeld

Opinion



In his election night speech this past April, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre said, "We got the highest share of vote our party has received since 1988." This statement was inaccurate and misleading. The Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) led by Poilievre was founded in 2003. It did not exist in 1988. In 1988, the main federal centre-right party was the Progressive Conservative (PC) Party, which stood for a moderate type of conservatism. The right-wing populist Reform Party (founded in 1987) opposed the PC Party in the 1988 federal election. Reform fielded 72 candidates then. One of them was Stephen Harper, who ran in Calgary West, Alta., against the PC candidate, Jim Hawkes. Poilievre would also get involved with the Reform Party later on.

Historically, mainstream conservatism has stood for pragmatism, gradual and prudent change, respect for established institutions, and skepticism of radical ideas (from the left or from the right). Today's CPC, though, does not stand for pragmatism or prudence. The CPC, despite its name, is actually not a "conservative" party in the precise sense of the term. The CPC, like the Reform Party, stands mainly for reactionary right-wing populism. This was shown by the support that many CPC MPs gave to the "Freedom Convoy" that illegally occupied Ottawa in 2022.

The CPC derives much of its identity, culture, and leadership from the Reform Party. Preston Manning, Reform's leader and one of its founders, has had a big influence on the CPC. In addition to Harper and Poilievre, former Conservative leader Andrew Scheer, and organizer Jenni Byrne were active in the Reform Party. Back in 1987, few would have predicted that the Reformers would one day take over the Conservative brand.

Just a few years after its launch, the Reform Party achieved a breakthrough in

1993. That year Reform got 52 MPs elected, one of whom was Harper. Under then-prime minister Kim Campbell, the PCs started the 1993 election campaign in a strong place. However, they lost ground fast, and were reduced to two MPs. While the PC Party experienced a slight recovery with then-leader Jean Charest in the 1997 election, winning 20 seats and 18.8 per cent of the vote, Reform won 60 seats. Reform's 19.3 per cent of the vote was much more efficient.

The Reform Party renamed itself the Canadian Alliance in March 2000, and Stockwell Day became its new leader. Former prime minister Joe Clark had returned as PC leader in late 1998. When then-prime minister Jean Chrétien called the election for Nov. 27, 2000, the Liberals were poised to win a third-straight majority. The Alliance went on to win 25.5 per cent of the vote, and 66 seats. The PC Party won 12 seats, and 12.2 per cent of the vote. As it turned out, this election would be the last one ever fought by the PC Party.

Efforts to "unite the right" grew more urgent. Harper became leader of the Alliance in March 2002. The Alliance and the PC Party merged in December 2003, thus forming the current CPC. The merger's timing and terms made it easy for Harper to become the CPC's first leader in March 2004. His control over the new CPC allowed him to mould it in his own image over the next 11 years. The CPC turned into a party of the reactionary right.

Thanks to the merger, Reformers such as Harper took control of the Conservative brand and eliminated a historical institution (the PC Party) that had stood in their way. The merger gave Harper the key to unlock the brand loyalty of many conservative voters who would otherwise never have voted for the Reform Party or the Canadian Alliance.

The PC Party's demise, though, left a large hole in the centre-right of Canada's political space. Any society needs both moderate conservatism and moderate liberalism to develop in a balanced way. Canada has lacked a nation-wide moderate conservative option in its elections for the last 25 years.

Michael Huenefeld is a sessional lecturer at the University of British Columbia Sauder School of Business. He received an award from former prime minister Joe Clark for outstanding service to the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada in 2002, and volunteered for former Quebec premier Jean Charest's Conservative Party leadership campaign in 2022.

The Hill Times

First Nations built the first North American economy—it's time Canada recognized that

Partnership with Indigenous Peoples from the beginning of the CUSMA review would be a clear step towards economic reconciliation.

Kyra Wilson



Opinion

Long before anyone drew borders on a map, First Nations in these lands had expansive trade routes that connected our peoples from coast to coast to coast. Copper from Lake Superior, buffalo hides from the Plains, shells from the coasts—all moved freely through nations that governed, travelled, and traded without passports or customs booths.

This continent-wide economy is thousands of years old. It is the foundation on which the modern North American economy was built. Yet, today, we are shut out of the very trade systems that sit on top of our traditional networks.

The Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA)—the successor to NAFTA—shapes \$2-trillion in trade every year. It influences everything from farm exports and energy corridors to the price of food, and how quickly goods cross the border.

And yet, when CUSMA was negotiated, First Nations governments were not invited. Our rights to trade and move across borders were not considered. Our voices were not at the table. There is one small clause in the entire agreement that references Indigenous Peoples—and it doesn't guarantee anything. It's discretionary. It's symbolic, not structural. If you are invisible in the rules, you are excluded from the benefits.

CUSMA is only part of the story. Canada is now pushing major economic initiatives like

the One Canadian Economy Act, a new Major Projects Office, and efforts to speed up permits and interprovincial trade. We are told these changes will make Canada more competitive. But they could also give provinces more control over projects and decisions happening on Treaty and ancestral lands without First Nations consent.

That's a recipe for more political fights, more court cases, and more delays. There is a better way: partnership from the beginning. The border dividing Canada and the U.S. is only a couple of centuries old. It was drawn long after our nations were here, long after our people traded freely and travelled freely.

Canada's own courts have confirmed this. Cases like *Desautel* and *Montour* show that First Nations mobility and trade rights still exist, regardless of where a colonial line was drawn. A First Nations business owner shouldn't be stuck at a border crossing explaining 200 years of history to a customs agent.

When First Nations lead economic development, every-

one benefits. We are leading clean energy projects that will power North America. We manage lands and waters that contain critical minerals Canada needs. We are growing First Nation-owned companies ready to export to global markets. In Manitoba, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs has proposed a First Nations Trade Commissioner Office—a practical solution that would bring our governments directly into trade missions and negotiations. Imagine Canada going into CUSMA renewal talks with First Nation diplomacy and expertise beside them, instead of behind them. That is what economic reconciliation can look like.

CUSMA is up for its first major review in 2026. Canada should use that moment to say:

- First Nations are at the decision-making table;
- First Nations Treaty rights and inherent rights to trade and mobility will be enforced;
- Projects affecting First Nation territories require their consent;

- First Nations knowledge will strengthen environmental standards; and

- First Nation citizens will cross the border with rights, not hassles.

This isn't about symbolism. This is about constitutional law, economic certainty, and basic fairness. If CUSMA doesn't respect the first economies of North America, then it is not working for Canada, either. We are asking Canada to negotiate:

- A First Nations Trade Chapter, not just a one-off reference in CUSMA;

- A role in dispute resolution because we have a right to be in the room when rules are enforced;

- Recognition of cross-border rights because mobility built this continent; and

- A trade secretariat so First Nations can work with U.S. tribes and Mexican Indigenous Peoples.

Canada says it is serious about reconciliation. Here is a real, tangible place to prove it. First Nations built the first economy of this continent.

As Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, I stand ready to work with Canada—and with partners in the U.S. and Mexico—to ensure the future of North American trade reflects the nations who have always been here, and always will be.

Grand Chief Kyra Wilson is Anishinaabe from Long Plain First Nation, and was elected as the second woman and youngest Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in January 2025.

The Hill Times

Swapping the tragedy of the horizon for the expediency of today

Alison Wines & Wren Montgomery



Opinion

Prime Minister Mark Carney's first budget is out, and the highly anticipated nation-building plan has limped into the limelight. The 493-page document reveals little about Carney's vision for Canada, although more clues can perhaps be found in what gets cut, rather than what will get created.

Of particular note is climate policy, and the prime minister's choice of language when talking about it. BBC journalist Mishal Husain shed light on the issue two weeks ago when, in an interview with Carney, she contrasted his cuts to environmental legislation with his earlier calls for strong climate solutions, asking, "What happened to you?" The Nov. 4 budget and the messaging around it did little to dispel the public's confusion about what our new PM stands for—a crucial miss when the nation is looking for leadership.

As climate communication experts, we believe this mixed messaging is a risk to the government's credibility, and raises important questions about who gets access to our nation's leaders, and how much influence outside voices have on both narrative and policy.

Take the gutting of the greenwashing provisions in the Competition Act, which is legislation that was designed to make the marketplace fairer for ordinary Canadians by preventing companies from making unsubstantiated "green" claims.

While any new legislation naturally raises questions, the regulations were extremely popular with consumers, and raised little objection from firms who recognized that honest claims about pro-environmental products and activities—that could be reasonably backed up—would be supported under the Act.

But heavily polluting industries, particularly Canada's fossil-fuel giants, didn't see it that way. They dramatically scrubbed entire websites and set about an immediate fear-mongering campaign, particularly seeking the ear of legislators with a message that

the regulations created "uncertainty" and were bad for business.

The PM and his new cabinet appear to have bought this misrepresentation hook, line, and sinker, saying the laws had been "creating investment uncertainty" since their introduction just last year. Where have we heard that line before?

The narrative similarities and regulatory wish-list granting don't stop with the unfortunate dismantling of anti-greenwashing laws. Carbon capture, use, and storage (CCUS) retains key tax breaks in the budget, despite 90 per cent of CCUS projects being deemed a failure, and at least 70 per cent of those that do work being used to increase oil recovery rather than storing the pollutants as most assume.

The PM's support for this anemic technology has at times sounded like pre-written lobbyist talking points: "We can be an energy superpower, and we have all the components in ... carbon capture and storage, which is going to be one of the determinants of competitiveness and productivity in a number of sectors," Carney said in an interview this past May.

Similarly, the prime minister has on multiple occasions referenced

"decarbonized oil"—an Orwellian contradiction in terms if ever there was one—and touted highly polluting natural gas as a lower-carbon pathway to "dominating the market for conventional energy."

The parroting of industry messaging from a former United Nations climate envoy perhaps becomes less surprising when you consider that Carney met with oil and gas lobbyists at a rate of roughly once every three days during his first 100 days in office. Likely much more, if "informal" (unregistered) lobbying activities are counted. Compare this with the fact that his office did not hold a single meeting with environmental experts during this time.

One might ask whether Carney still believes in the tragedy of the horizon, or whether political expediency today better reflects his true values.

The PM is in a tough spot. He has to unite fractious provinces and deal with an unpredictable trading partner that still holds sway over two-thirds of Canada's trade. Compromises will be a necessity, and the public has thus far shown a strong tolerance for trade-offs. But by treating climate and the economy

as a zero-sum game and appearing to adopt the lobbyists' narrative playbook, Carney raises questions about what he actually stands for, and risks losing the public's trust at a time when confidence in leaders is more essential than ever. Moreover, he gives credibility to polluters' greenwashing, and misses a unique opportunity to position Canada as an innovative leader ready to partner with economies that prioritize genuine clean progress.

Three-quarters of Canadians want stronger action on climate. Trading partners with more deeply integrated sustainability regulations expect Canada to deliver clean goods and services. As the dust settles on the budget and the government has the opportunity to hear from a wider range of voices, let's hope that the prime minister's language and policy direction reflect what this country really wants and needs, not just the wishes of the wealthiest corporations with the secret knock that opens the doors to the PMO.

Alison Wines is CEO of the Climate Communications Alliance, and an award-winning communication strategist. Wren Montgomery is associate professor of management and sustainability, and J.J. Wettlaufer Faculty Fellow at Ivey Business School at Western University. Her award-winning research has informed anti-greenwashing policies in Canada and globally.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

The critical-minerals battle is being fought on land—and over the sea



Energy and Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson recently signed agreements with other G7 partners to invest in Canadian critical mineral ventures, writes Ken Rubin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Internal documents give the impression Canada would gladly abandon its current support for a seabed-mining moratorium if some standards were in place.

Ken Rubin

Opinion



OTTAWA—With the race to find and use critical minerals heating up, most of the efforts are geared to speeding up land-based extraction projects.

But as a Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) access-to-information response notes, negotiations are underway to allow seabed mining of critical minerals within four years.

The obtained July 8, 2024, briefing note to then-natural resources minister Jonathan

Wilkinson indicated that Canada keeping to a moratorium on seabed mining until then could change if there were “robust regulations” in place, though it stressed there are both “risks and opportunities” to proceeding.

Canada is a member state of the International Seabed Authority Council (ISA) that is working—partly in secret—towards ending that moratorium for mining in international waters, aiming to adopt a go-ahead for a commercial seabed mining extraction code by 2030.

The briefing indicates that ISA discussed some of the details of an extraction code at its 2024 meeting: a royalty rate regime, a compliance environment compensation fund, and binding environmental thresholds. Key environmental concerns to assess further were sediment plumes (both benthic and mid-water), metal toxicity, and noise and light pollution.

Most concerning, the briefing concluded that, “The prospect of deep-sea mining coming online by the end of the decade ... is increasingly likely, and, as a result, Canada should remain closely engaged at the ISA.”

The impression gained is that Canada would gladly abandon its

current support for a moratorium on seabed mining if regulation and remediation standards—however minimal—were in place.

With Chinese companies beginning seabed mining testing and holding five of the 19 ISA exploration licences issued for nodule mining underwater, Canadian officials were only giving recognition to the existing pressures to get commercial seabed mining underway. There are now, a year later, more than 30 ISA-issued exploration licences covering more than 1.5 million square kilometres of the world’s seabed.

The 2024 briefing note saw seabed mining opportunities for Canada, stating “that industry stakeholders view British Columbia and Quebec as optimal destinations for greenfield offshore nodule processing facilities given deep-water port access, free market access, and existing expertise in ocean technology, environmental science, and metallurgy.”

Authorities also noted that some testing had already been done in Canada by a subsidiary of the Canadian-based The Metals Company (TMC), Nauru Ocean Resources, “to process ore into battery precursor materials.”

TMC is now trying to get the United States’ go-ahead to begin seabed mining off the American shores, and to do the same in the Indian Ocean—a move ISA has warned TMC not to do. TMC is pressing its case with American and other sympathetic authorities.

The U.S. is not an ISA member, and President Donald Trump issued an executive order this year to begin offshore mining in U.S. territorial or international waters.

What is more alarming, as recognized in the 2024 briefing note, was that nodule mining of seabed minerals “could negatively impact the viability of current junior nickel projects in Canada affecting company valuations by hundreds of millions of dollars,” and be “disruptive to conventional critical mineral supply chains.” So, there could be implications for the Canadian nickel industry and other land-based critical mining projects should sea-based mining projects go ahead.

NRCan was also aware that there was “strong opposition from environment advocacy groups” against going ahead with deep-sea mining, and that has not changed. Attached to the ministerial briefing note was a May

24, 2024, letter from more than a dozen groups, including Indigenous, environment, and civil rights groups, urging Canada to make ISA more transparent and to not back out of the declared moratorium as currently supported by a few dozen nations.

Meanwhile, the Carney government is in full-steam-ahead mode in the 2025 budget, providing billions of dollars and incentives for land-based critical mineral mining ventures, and processing facilities and needed infrastructure with the hope that more investors and companies come on board.

In addition, at the October G7 energy and environment ministers’ meeting held in Toronto, the Carney government signed agreements with other G7 partners to invest in Canadian critical mineral ventures, putting more momentum and hope for a brighter future for critical minerals mining.

Provincial governments like Ontario and British Columbia have joined in with investments and incentives, making even more bold claims. For instance, in a current TV ad, the Ontario government is claiming that billions of dollars and thousands of jobs will come to the province should the development of critical minerals—especially in the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario—proceed quickly in the next few years.

The contest has heated up with China and its dominance in critical minerals imposing restrictions on rare earths exports, and the U.S. signing trade deals favourable to getting other countries to undertake mining and projects for Americans. Those deals include strategic critical mineral supply agreements with Australia and Vietnam. The Americans also took equity stakes in two Canadian critical mineral companies whose current projects are in the U.S.

At this point, the scramble to secure alternate supplies for critical minerals that are used extensively in electric vehicles, semiconductor chips, and military equipment is mostly concentrated on advancing land-based extraction sites and projects, with less attention being paid to possible seabed mining projects.

Now, though, companies like TMC and Lockheed Martin are pressing for seabed mining exploration projects to begin earlier than 2030 in international waters. But so far, in further 2025 ISA meetings that Canada attended, there has not as yet been agreement on a firm binding mining code—though some countries are trying to push for a pre-2030 extraction code.

How this all plays out remains to be seen as the rush and hype is on full display here in Canada from sea to sea. But there has been less than full disclosure or thorough assessment accompanying those expectations, let alone keeping the public informed or given a choice about the deep dive coming soon for seabed mining projects.

Ken Rubin is an investigative researcher writing on public interest matters and is reachable via kenrubin.ca.

The Hill Times

Liberals' 'quiet confidence' the best move as budget 'dominoes' fall with the Conservative caucus count, say politicos

'If you're the Liberals, you let this play out,' and don't get in the way of any opposition mistakes that may ultimately ease the passage of the budget, says Summa Strategies' Tim Powers.

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economic statement was delayed by then-finance minister Chrystia Freeland's (University-Rosedale, Ont.) surprise resignation last winter.

Budget day took an unexpected turn before Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) rose in the House on Nov. 4 as news broke that three-term Conservative MP Chris d'Entremont (Acadie-Annapolis, N.S.) would cross the floor to join the Liberals.

"The Liberals tabled a budget with a \$78-billion deficit, and yet the vast majority of the coverage is about the political games being played and the absolute chaos and disorganization from the opposition," Cullen said, noting that while the Conservatives were scrambling to get ahead of any more potential dissenters, the Liberals were demonstrating to voters that "the stability in Parliament goes hand in hand with the stability of [Prime Minister Mark] Carney's government."

In a Nov. 9 interview on CBC's *Rosemary Barton Live*, d'Entremont said his decision to leave the party had been cemented when Conservative House leader Andrew Scheer (Regina-Qu'Appelle, Sask.) and whip Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie, Alta.) "barged" into his office—almost knocking down his assistant as they opened the door, he said—and yelled at him about "how much of a snake" he was.

"It really pushed me to a point where it's like, 'OK, I guess my decision is made for sure now,'" d'Entremont told host Catherine Cullen, describing the atmosphere created by party leadership as "a frat house rather than a serious political party."

The Conservatives have denied the allegation, telling the CBC that the pair "calmly entered into the reception area," and that Scheer spoke in a "calm and



Blackbird Strategies' Olivier Cullen says that while the Conservatives fight, the Liberals are demonstrating that parliamentary stability 'goes hand in hand' with the prime minister's governing style. *Handout photograph*

measured voice" before "quietly" leaving the room."

Widespread speculation over potential additional defections ensued after d'Entremont's departure, with several possible names floating around Parliament Hill, including four-term Conservative MP Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, Alta.). Jeneroux dismissed the floor-crossing rumours on Nov. 5, but announced his upcoming resignation the following day, just prior to the vote on his party's sub-amendment to the budget.

On Nov. 5, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta.) failed to table the first amendment to the budget, allowing the Bloc Québécois to take the slot. The Conservatives' subamendment was defeated 198-139 by the Liberals, NDP, and Bloc. The Bloc's main amendment—also calling for a rejection of the budget—was defeated Nov. 7 as the Conservatives joined Liberals to beat it by 306 votes to 30.

Jeneroux did not vote on either day, nor did he provide reasons for his departure in his resignation letter. However, in a Nov. 6 Facebook post, he denied allegations that he had been coerced by party officials into resigning as an MP, adding that he wanted to spend more time with his family and that his resignation would likely take effect in the spring.

Jeneroux's social media post came after CTV News reported he had been in discussions with the Liberals about crossing the floor, but was warned by his own party officials that doing so would have serious consequences.



Summa Strategies' Tim Powers says Poilievre is 'the most vulnerable' he has been during his tenure as Conservative leader. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Following Jeneroux's resignation, Poilievre's office struck a conciliatory tone, thanking him for "a decade of service."

Amid the "melodrama," and while opposition parties and Liberal supporters alike fretted over what they viewed as lacklustre consultations to acquire the needed votes, Cullen said he suspects Carney (Nepean, Ont.) had already worked out the math behind the scenes.

"This is Carney's governing style," explained Cullen, now director of strategy at Blackbird Strategies, adding that the prime minister's take-it-or-leave-it approach reflected his confidence that opposition parties wouldn't want an election.

Tim Powers, chair of Summa Strategies and managing director at Abacus Data, told *The Hill Times* that the Liberals' best strategy is to follow the advice of 19th century French general Napoleon Bonaparte: "Never interrupt your enemy when he's making a mistake."

"If you're the Liberals, you let this play out," Powers said, noting that the Liberals are likely content to watch the Conservative infighting, despite it partially overshadowing the budget's media coverage.

Powers said it would be impossible to know "when the dominoes started to fall on the current round of discontent" with Poilievre's leadership, but cited the Conservative head's recent interview with YouTube's *North-ern Perspective* where he said the RCMP's "despicable" leadership had failed to charge former prime minister Justin Trudeau

for wrongdoing related to his 2016 vacation on the Aga Khan's island and the 2019 SNC-Lavalin controversy.

A week later, CBC/Radio-Canada reported that some Conservative MPs had serious concerns about Poilievre's leadership, which spurred a round of speculation about possible caucus resignations.

While those rumours had appeared to settle in the lead up to the budget, Powers said that with MPs returning to their constituencies for Remembrance Week, Poilievre is in "the most vulnerable position he's ever been in" as his caucus is away from Ottawa and the usual peer pressure and monitoring.

"If people are thinking of making a change, next week might be a time when they feel more emboldened to do so," Powers said. "They will have time to be away and hear from their communities; so this week could be very telling."

Conservative strategists Cole Hogan and Ashton Arsenault both dismissed speculation that more Conservatives might cross the floor, but agreed the Liberals' budget would likely pass with a few NDP abstentions.

"The NDP has more flexibility, but the Conservative caucus is foursquare against this budget," Hogan said, adding that he'd have said the same before d'Entremont's move. "Last week will only steel the caucus' resolve."

Arsenault said he'd be "shocked and mortified" to see any Conservatives vote in support of the budget or abstain, but also doubted the Liberals would need to rely on the House Speaker

Francis Scarpaleggia's (Lac-Saint-Louis, Que.) tie-breaking vote to succeed, predicting at least three votes from the remaining parties.

"Canadians don't want an election right now, and the arithmetic is not that difficult," said Arsenault, a partner with Crestview Strategy. "The government should be able to figure this out."

Former NDP MP Matthew Dubé told *The Hill Times* that the Liberals appear to be benefiting from "a mix of luck and preparation," and that their "majority confidence" ahead of the budget "seems far less arrogant in hindsight."

"They're in the driver's seat now," said Dubé, now a vice-president with Proof Strategies.

While the NDP remains torn between opposing expected public-service cuts and avoiding a snap vote, abstaining remains "a legitimate way forward" to register dissent without toppling the government, Dubé said.

Poilievre, meanwhile, faces a "more tenuous position" as he will need to divide his attention this week between the budget and internal unrest.

"One of the main carrots Poilievre doesn't seem to have is listening," Dubé said. "But it's getting pretty late in the day to change in a way that will feel authentic to his caucus and Canadians."

Brad Lavigne, a former principal secretary to then-NDP leader Jack Layton, said he doesn't believe any last-minute negotiations will alter the NDP's decision over the next few days, but thinks the Liberals have already provided enough wiggle room for the party "to register their opposition to elements of this budget without triggering an election."

Lavigne, now president of Counsel Public Affairs, said he foresees at least one or two members of the NDP caucus—most likely interim leader Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.)—abstaining, allowing others to vote against the budget without triggering an election.

Lavigne also noted that while the NDP has already registered its concerns with the budget, including its cuts to the public service, the Liberals have also included several initiatives the party has called for, particularly the federal infrastructure funding for a new Filipino cultural centre in Davies' riding. The project has also taken on greater significance for its Filipino constituents following the fatal car-ramming attack this past spring during the community's Lapu-Lapu Day festival.

Lavigne said the recent floor crossing had only removed one more "pain point" from a decision for a New Democrat to abstain.

While "nobody gets everything they want in a budget," the NDP's misgivings aren't enough to make a convincing argument to voters in favour of bringing down the government, Lavigne said.

"The floor crossing made Davies' life easier," Lavigne said. "Now he only needs one more abstention; the rest can vote against it. It's the best of both worlds."

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

NEWS

‘It’s none of their business’: Senators hit the brakes on new staff ethics code after political-disclosure rules make waves

Central to concerns is a need for staff to disclose broadly defined personal political activities, undertaken outside of work.

Continued from page 1

election, but includes any activity supporting or opposing a candidate during an election period.” She said it also requires staff to get their Senator’s sign off to run for a nomination.

“It’s extremely, extremely broad, and so, in fact, I wonder if the people who drafted it even recognized how broad that is,” Batters told *The Hill Times*. She said she thinks it could to apply to any federal, provincial, municipal, or school board election, and any related activities staff undertake in their personal time, from putting up a lawn sign to volunteering, attending a political event or rally, or even posting on social media—all of which staff could be required to report.

Batters said there was “zero” consultation of her or her staff by CIBA prior to the Code’s adoption or implementation, and that she didn’t learn of it until after it had come into effect.

“It got adopted in camera and in secret, no one had information about it at all for months,” said Batters. “When I first saw this new Code and I asked for a copy of it ... I was just completely stunned that this type of political activity would be [required to be disclosed], especially on—I have to emphasize—on their own personal time and in off-duty hours. It’s none of their business, and certainly not something that should be subject to reporting.”

She said Senators and staff have long been disallowed from using “Senate time or Senate resources for those types of partisan activities ... but to have people’s personal time dictated by an administration, it’s just a complete overreach.”

“I would like to see political activity [provisions] completely removed. It’s not in the existing Code, it has no place in it,” said Batters, noting the Senate is a “political institution.”

“This is a free and democratic country, and it should be treated as such.”

Aside from the new requirements, Batters and others—including Conservative Senate



A new Code of Values and Ethics for Senate Staff was implemented in early September, and paused pending review and consultations last month. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Leader Leo Housakos (Wellington, Que.), and Deputy Leader Yonah Martin (British Columbia), who both raised the matter during Senate Question Period on Oct. 29—have been critical of the “secret” manner by which the policy was drafted and adopted.

Batters said she sees “no reason” CIBA needed to deal with it entirely “in secret,” noting that when she was deputy chair during the 42nd Parliament, the committee discussed efforts to review and update the Senate’s workplace harassment policy in public. “You’re discussing it as a policy document ... you’re not discussing individual people, individual personnel decisions.”

Responding to questions about CIBA’s approach during Question Period on Oct. 29, its chair, ISG Senator Lucie Moncion (Ontario) said the new Code was “studied for four years,” adding “a lot of information was provided to staff,” and that “staff and Senators were consulted.” She noted the Conservatives had a caucus member—now-former senator Judith Seidman, who retired in August—on the subcommittee that worked on the policy. Asked why it was deemed necessary, Moncion said the previous policy was 40 years old and “needed a review.”

The Hill Times asked Batters whether there was any feedback process through the Conservative reps who would have been involved in drafting the new policy. She declined to talk about “what we talk about in caucus,” but said there was no such process by CIBA.

“Something that impacts all Senators and all Senators’ staffers, that should be something that is not left to an individual group member,” she said.

A Senate source familiar with the matter said the Working Group

on Senator Services, which worked on development of the new code, included one staff representative from each of the recognized groups in the Senate, but to their understanding, those reps were expected to be the voice for staff, not undertake consultations themselves.

“There was some consultation, [but] whether it was truly fulfilling consultation” they’d leave to others to decide, said the source. “Now hearing the amount of pushback from some of my colleagues, I can understand that they didn’t feel it was meaningful.”

The source said along with the annual disclosures, the requirement for staff to get permission from Senators to undertake certain political activities is also a source of concern, describing it as going beyond nominations to include volunteer activities.

“We’re not bureaucrats, we’re inherently political,” said the source. “We may not all be partisan political—there’s a certain number that are—but we’re all at the end of the day pursuing a policy interest in the name of our boss.”

While many staffers may be aligned with their bosses in terms of partisanship, there are some who work for Senators because of aligned policy interests, regardless of party affiliations, noted the source.

“It could make for some awkward conversations, and some people feel it’s a violation of their constitutional rights to be able to participate in the democratic process,” they said, noting that while they would personally feel comfortable asking their own boss, “some staff would be apprehensive, if not fearful, of asking their boss for things like this.”

Another Senator’s staffer who spoke with *The Hill Times* said

people have been confused about the policy, “riled up” over its provisions regarding political activity, and “very angry about how this has been brought” about.

“It’s something that I’ve seen quite a few people be very, very animated about,” said the staffer, who said they did not recall being consulted on the new Code.

In expressing her support for MacDonald’s motion at CIBA on Oct. 23, ISG Facilitator Raymonde Saint-Germain (De la Vallière, Que.), who had been chair of the Subcommittee on Human Resources when the Code was being drafted and reviewed, said the group felt that its members “representing each of the groups and caucuses had undertaken those internal consultations, in addition to the Policy Committee.”

“It was important to us—and still is—that those consultations take place,” she said, adding though that they “may not have been as extensive as what we were told.”

She said the decision to review and hold consultations on the Code “will provide clarity and address the disinformation, so to speak.”

Not all Senators and staff have the same level of concern over the new Code.

ISG Senator Kim Pate (Algonquin Anishinabe Aki, Ont.) said she wasn’t aware of the changes prior to seeing *The Hill Times*’ Nov. 3 interview request, but explained her staff—who “triage” the large volume of information that comes her way—hadn’t flagged it for her attention.

“They did get the document [on Sept. 10], they did look at it, and they determined that because they didn’t have any particular

concerns that I probably would not, either,” she said.

Having reviewed the new Code since, Pate said she isn’t concerned by its disclosure requirements as it brings transparency and accountability, and is the sort of thing that Senators should be discussing with their staff anyways. But she said she would be concerned if it was “just about controlling behaviour that had no impact on the work of the office.”

Pate said while changes like this “often” come about “because of an issue,” she’s not aware of any such issue, and therefore isn’t “certain why it was adopted.”

She noted that, “historically,” ISG members have been required to have “non-partisan perspectives.”

“It wouldn’t surprise me that many of my colleagues might want to see that extended to their staff. It’s the kind of discussions that I would hope people would have as they’re hiring people,” she said.

Pate said given concerns over a perceived lack of consultation, she thinks the decision to pause the new Code and launch a review is a “good idea.”

PSG Senator Andrew Cardozo (Ontario) said he’s “glad” the policy has been paused as he doesn’t believe there was “adequate consultation.”

“During office hours, using office equipment and facilities, staff should not be involved in any political activity, unless they take the time off and do it on their own time,” said Cardozo. “But after office hours, they do whatever they like, and that’s none of my business.”

Cardozo said “this type of issue would” normally be highlighted to Senators during weekly caucus meetings, but the new policy “never came to our caucus for discussion, so I certainly didn’t have any input into it ahead of time,” though he noted it’s “possible it slipped through the cracks.”

Cardozo said that while he would expect his staff to disclose to him if they were involved in a political party or campaign taking a different position to a particular issue or policy file he was working on, he doesn’t think mandatory disclosures to the Senate administration are “necessary.”

“We want to attract people who are committed and interested in public policy so I think part of making good working conditions is people should be open to pursue their interests,” said Cardozo.

In a Nov. 3 email, PSG Senator Rodger Cuzner (Nova Scotia) said he shares “some” of the concerns raised by Batters that the new policy “may in fact go a bit too far as it relates to restricting the political activities of staff outside the work period.” He said he is “glad we will now engage in a more open and transparent discussion across the whole of the Senate.”

CSG Senator Percy Downe (Charlottetown, P.E.I.) said by email that with the policy now under review, at this stage, his only comment is “that what Senators’ staff do after work hours, assuming it is legal, in their community is not my business.”

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Hill Climbers

By Laura Ryckewaert



A look at Seniors Secretary McLean's four-person shop

Plus, Hill Climbers has an update on Defence Minister David McGuinty's office, which includes policy director Radey Barrack and senior adviser Renée Filiatrault.

Secretary of State for Seniors **Stephanie McLean** has a lean, four-member office at her back, currently led by acting chief of staff and director of policy **Eric Nicol**.

As recently noted by **Hill Climbers**, **Jessie Pierre**, who joined Prime Minister **Mark Carney's** office as director of human resources earlier this fall, had initially been chief of staff to McLean post-election.

Nicol, who was originally tapped as policy and operations director to the secretary of state, is now acting as head of the office, in addition to overseeing policy work.

Nicol has been working on the seniors file since 2023. He was originally hired as an Ontario regional affairs adviser to then-labour minister **Seamus O'Regan** in May of that year, and that July O'Regan added on responsibility as minister for seniors. Nicol stayed on after **Steven MacKinnon** took over as labour and seniors minister in 2024, and was later promoted to policy and senior Ontario regional adviser. After Liberal MP **Joanne Thompson** was tapped as seniors minister in the Dec. 20, 2024, cabinet shuffle, Nicol again stayed on board, becoming director of policy. He's also a past assistant to Liberal MP **Yasir Naqvi**, and worked on Naqvi's successful 2025 re-election campaign.

Tackling parliamentary affairs for McLean is adviser **Solomiia Romanenko**.

Romanenko has previously worked in the MP offices of Ontario Liberals **Marcus Powlowski** and **Patty Hajdu**, and most recently worked in Hajdu's office as then-Indigenous services and Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor) minister as assistant

to the parliamentary secretary and parliamentary affairs adviser for FedNor.

Fielding media requests for McLean is senior communications adviser **Kirstie Hudson**.

A former longtime producer with the CBC—in both Toronto and British Columbia—Hudson was most recently doing government communications and public affairs work as part of the B.C. public service. She's also a former editor with Orca Book Publishers, where she worked for more than seven years after leaving the

CBC at the end of 2017, as noted on her LinkedIn profile. According to a profile on Orca's blog, Hudson had edited non-fiction and "middle-grade titles" at the company.

Nicholas McCue is executive assistant to McLean. He's a former executive assistant to both then-seniors minister **Kamal Khera** and the minister's chief of staff, and later followed Khera to the diversity, inclusion, and persons with disabilities portfolio after she was shuffled in 2023, continuing as her EA.

McCue is also an ex-EA to then-diversity and inclusion minister **Bardish Chagger**, a past special assistant to then-Indigenous and northern affairs minister **Carolyn Bennett**, and a former assistant to Bennett as the then-MP for Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont., and to then-Liberal MP **Andy Fillmore**.

Update on Defence Minister McGuinty's team

Hill Climbers is past due for another look at National Defence Minister **David McGuinty's** office, which now includes 16 staffers.

Already covered so far in these pages are chief of staff **Cory Pike**, director of communications **Alice Hansen**, director of operations **Andrew Green**, senior policy adviser **Conor Lewis**, West and North regional adviser **Quinn Rinke**, and assistant to the parliamentary secretary **Jean-Michel Tweed**.

Laurent de Casanove, who was previously noted as press secretary and senior communications adviser to McGuinty back in July, is now director of commu-

nications to Government Transformation, Public Works, and Procurement Minister **Joël Lightbound**, as recently reported by **Hill Climbers**.

McGuinty's team includes a long list of former staffers to his portfolio predecessor **Bill Blair**, including director of policy **Radey Barrack**. Blair is no longer a member of cabinet, but remains the MP for Scarborough Southwest, Ont.

Barrack is a former longtime assistant to Blair, most recently as parliamentary affairs director to Blair as then-defence minister, but started out as an assistant in his MP office in 2015.

Blair was named to cabinet for the first time in 2018 as the then-minister for border security and organized crime reduction, and subsequently hired Barrack as his ministerial director of operations. Barrack has since also been operations director to Blair as then-public safety and emergency preparedness minister, and operations director and later policy director to Blair as then-Privy Council president and emergency preparedness minister. A veteran staffer, Barrack's work history includes time spent working for then-Liberal MP **Michael Ignatieff**.

Hilary Hendriks remains on the defence team as a senior policy adviser to McGuinty.

Another ex-Blair staffer, Hendriks had worked for the former minister since 2020, beginning as executive assistant to Blair's chief of staff as then-public safety and emergency preparedness minister. She went on to be a special assistant for policy and operations in Blair's office as then-public safety minister and Privy Council president—while continuing as EA to his chief of staff—and policy adviser to Blair as then-defence minister.

Renée Filiatrault continues as a senior adviser to the defence minister.

A longtime defence staffer—including as press secretary and communications director to then-Liberal defence ministers **Art Eggleton** and **Bill Graham**, respectively—Filiatrault was communications director to then-defence minister **Harjit Sajjan** from early 2016 until the 2019 federal election. She subsequently stepped away from the



Senior adviser Renée Filiatrault. The Hill Times file photograph

Hill and went on to be a senior fellow with the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, a fellow with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, and a member of the board of directors of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute before returning in 2023 as an adviser for culture change to then-defence minister Blair.

Filiatrault's CV includes time spent as a foreign service officer in Afghanistan as part of Task Force Kandahar, and as head of media and public affairs for the British High Commission in Ottawa.

Gwendolyn Culver is director of parliamentary affairs to McGuinty. She, too, is an ex-Blair staffer, and first joined the defence team as a senior adviser for parliamentary affairs in 2023. She was subsequently promoted to director of issues management and senior adviser on Arctic policy in May 2024.

A former House of Commons page, Culver has also been a special assistant for legislative and parliamentary affairs to then-northern affairs minister **Dan Vandal**, and a compliance analyst with the G7 Research Group.

Working under Culver is senior parliamentary affairs adviser **Audrey Aubut**, who was last working in the veterans office.

Aubut is an ex-assistant to Quebec MP **Stéphane Lauson**, and went on to be manager of communications and public relations for the Young Bar of Montreal before returning to the Hill in 2022 as a parliamentary affairs adviser and assistant to the parliamentary secretary to Liberal MP **Ginette Petitpas Taylor** as then-official languages minister. After Petitpas Taylor was named veterans minister in



Kirstie Hudson is senior communications adviser to McLean. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Eric Nicol is acting chief of staff and policy director to McLean. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

2023, Aubut followed, becoming a parliamentary affairs and Quebec regional adviser, and assistant to the parliamentary secretary.

Ezechiele Nana is Quebec regional adviser to McGuinty, while **Alexa Kalsatos** is a senior operations and Greater Toronto Area (GTA) regional adviser, and **Nicholas Hautamaki** is Atlantic regional adviser.

Nana continues in a role he'd filled under then-defence minister Blair since



Ezechiele Nana covers the Quebec desk for McGuinty. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

November 2023. First hired as both Quebec adviser and assistant to the parliamentary secretary to Blair, Nana dropped the latter duties in 2024. He's also spent time as press secretary to current Foreign Minister **Anita Anand** as then-Treasury Board president, and as a communications aide to Sajjan as then-international development minister, amongst other past experience.

Kalsatos first joined the defence office under Blair as an operations adviser in September 2023, and roughly one year later was promoted to senior operations and regional affairs adviser for the GTA.



Gwendolyn Culver is director of parliamentary affairs. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

She's also an ex-aide in Blair's MP office, and a former intern in then-trade minister **Mary Ng's** office.

Hautamaki was previously busy as a field organizer for the federal Liberals in Newfoundland and Labrador, and has also been a public affairs consultant with Soy Canada, a co-ordinator with Grain Growers of Canada, and a public affairs co-ordinator with Impact Public Affairs, among other things.

Supporting Hansen on the communications end is adviser **Muntaha Ahmed**, who's focused on social media and strategic communications. Ahmed was previously an Ontario regional adviser to Blair as then-defence minister, and is also a past executive assistant to then-Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario minister **Filomena Tassi**, and an ex-aide to Khera as the then-MP for Brampton West, Ont.

Finally, rounding out McGuinty's team is the minister's executive assistant, **Claire Fisher**.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Parliamentary Calendar

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

Michaëlle Jean and her eponymous foundation to be fêted at the National Gallery on Nov. 12



An event marking 20 years since Michaëlle Jean was named as the first Black woman to serve as governor general, and celebrating the transformative work of her namesake foundation will take place at the National Gallery on Nov. 12. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

TUESDAY, NOV. 11— WEDNESDAY, NOV. 12

G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting—Foreign Minister Anita Anand will host the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the second time this year Canada will host such a meeting as it holds the G7 presidency. Tuesday, Nov. 11, to Wednesday, Nov. 12 in Ontario's Niagara Region.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 12

House Schedule—The House of Commons will sit Nov. 17-21; Nov. 24-28; Dec. 1-5; and Dec. 8-12. In total, the House will have sat only 73 days this year. Last year, it sat 122 days, and in 2023, it sat 121 days. In 2022, it sat 129 days, and in 2021, it sat 95 days.

Minister Champagne to Deliver Remarks—Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne will discuss the federal budget at a breakfast event hosted by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. Wednesday, Nov. 12, at 8 a.m. PT at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, 900 W. Georgia St. Details: boardoftrade.com.

Defence Procurement Conference—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts its Defence Procurement Conference 2025. Wednesday, Nov. 12, at 8:30 a.m. ET at The Westin Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Details: cgai.ca.

Liberal MP Klassen to Attend Fundraiser—The South Surrey-White Rock Federal Liberal Association hosts a fundraising buffet dinner with Liberal MP Ernie Klassen. Wednesday, Nov. 12, at 5:30 p.m. PT, at Kiki's Restaurant, Surrey, B.C. Details: liberal.ca.

Celebrating the Michaëlle Jean Foundation—Twenty years ago, Michaëlle Jean made history as Canada's first Black woman to serve as governor general. Celebrate her transformative work with her namesake foundation throughout the years, and the enduring impact it continues to have featuring distinguished guests, live musical performances, and a cocktail reception. Wednesday, Nov. 12, at 6 p.m. ET at the National Gallery of Canada, 380 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

Book Launch: *Challenging Exile*—Library and Archives Canada hosts the launch of the new book, *Challenging Exile: Japanese Canadians and the Wartime Constitution*, by Eric M. Adams and Jordan Stanger-Ross, meticulous and moving account of a shameful episode in Canada's past. Wednesday, Nov. 12, at 7 p.m. ET at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register online: canada.ca/en/library-archives.

THURSDAY, NOV. 13

AFCEA Executive Breakfast—The Ottawa Chapter of the Armed Forces Communication and Electronics Association hosts a breakfast event with Luc Gagnon, chief technology officer for Treasury Board Secretariat, who will share strategic insights into how the federal government is leveraging cybersecurity to navigate and respond to the evolving digital landscape. Thursday, Nov. 13, at 7:30 a.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 99 Bank St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

Minister Champagne to Deliver Remarks—Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne will take part in "Budget 2025: A Conversation with Canada's Finance Minister," hosted by the Economic Club of Toronto. Thursday, Nov. 13, at 11:45 a.m. ET in Toronto (location to be disclosed upon registration). Register: canadianclub.org.

Webinar: 'Federal Budget Post-Mortem'—The Toronto Association for Business Economics hosts a webinar, "Living on the Edge: Federal Budget Post-Mortem," with William Robson, president and CEO, C.D. Howe Institute; and Pedro Antunes, chief economist, Conference Board of Canada. Thursday, Nov. 13, at 12 p.m. ET happening online: cabe.ca/events.

Tom Mulcair to Attend Book Launch—Former NDP leader Tom Mulcair will take part in a discussion on party loyalty among Canadian parties at the launch of the new book, *No I in Team*, by professors Alex Marland, Jared J. Wesley, and Mireille Lalancette, hosted by McGill University. Thursday, Nov. 13, at 4 p.m. ET at Louis-Joseph Forget House, 1195 Sherbrooke St. W., Montreal. Register: chaireduquebeccitoyennete@gmail.com.

REEL Politics Film Series—Rescheduled from Nov. 6, the 2017 film *The Death Of Stalin* is the second screening in the REEL Politics Film Series, an eight-night fundraiser for the Jaimie Anderson Parliamentary Internships happening monthly through April 2026. Thursday, Nov. 13, at the ByTowne Cinema, 325 Rideau St., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

Foreign Correspondents Lecture—Carleton University hosts the 2025 Peter Stursberg Foreign Correspondents Lecture. Sky News Africa correspondent Youssa Elbagir will deliver remarks on "Human reporting from Sudan and beyond — a remedy for selective empathy?" Thursday, Nov. 13, at 7 p.m. ET at Richcraft Hall, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Details: events.carleton.ca.

FRIDAY, NOV. 14

Seminar: 'Parliamentary Committees'—The Canadian Study of Parliament Group hosts the first in its latest series of three seminars. "Parliamentary Committees" will explore how parliamentary committees in Canada function and evolve including the roles of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, how public servants prepare for appearances while maintaining political neutrality, and the impact of minority governments, digital tools, and emerging technologies. The next seminars will take place in 2026. Friday, Nov. 14, at 8:30 a.m. ET at 111 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, NOV. 14— SUNDAY, NOV. 16

XXVIII Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians—Canada's special representative for the reconstruction of Ukraine Chrystia Freeland, Defence Minister David McGuinty, Senator Stan Kutchnier, and Ukraine's Ambassador to Canada Andrii Plakhotniuk will deliver remarks at the 28th Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians. This event will bring together community leaders, policymakers, government officials, and engaged citizens to discuss key issues affecting Ukrainian Canadians and shape the future direction of the

community. Friday, Nov. 14, to Sunday, Nov. 16 at Delta Hotels Toronto Airport & Conference Centre, Toronto. Details: congress.ucc.ca.

FRIDAY, NOV. 14— SATURDAY, NOV. 29

European Union Film Festival—The European Union Film Festival marks its 40th anniversary with two weeks of free, award-winning, and newly released films from 27 EU member states. Each film's respective embassy will host filmmaker talks and embassy-led cultural programming. Friday, Nov. 14, to Saturday, Nov. 29, at the Ottawa Art Gallery, Level 3, 10 Daly Ave., Ottawa. Details: cfi-icf.ca.

MONDAY, NOV. 17

Book Launch: *A New Blueprint for Government*—Carleton University hosts the launch of Jim Mitchell's new book, *A New Blueprint for Government: Reshaping Power, the PMO, and the Public Service*, featuring a panel discussion with former Treasury Board secretary Graham Flack, Institute on Governance president and CEO Allen Sutherland, and Carleton professor Jennifer Robson. Monday, Nov. 17, at 11 a.m. ET at Carleton University, Dunton Tower, Room 2017, 1125 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

Minister Michel to Take Part in Panel—Health Minister Marjorie Michel will participate in a panel, "Thrive: The Economic Case for Investing in Children's Health in Canada," hosted by the Canadian Club of Ottawa. Other participants include Emily Gruenwoldt, CEO, Children's Healthcare Canada; Bruce Squires, president, McMaster Children's Hospital; and Matt Stewart, partner, Deloitte Consulting. Monday, Nov. 17, at 12 p.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St., Ottawa. Register: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Lunch: 'Perspectives on the Policy Process in IRCC'—Carleton University hosts a lunch event, "Perspectives on the Policy Process in Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada," featuring Carol McQueen, director general for Settlement and Integration Policy at IRCC. Monday, Nov. 17 at 12 p.m. ET at Richcraft Hall, Carleton University,

1125 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Register: events.carleton.ca.

AmCham's Thanksgiving Dinner—The Toronto chapter of the American Chamber of Commerce in Canada hosts its annual American Thanksgiving Dinner featuring an address by Ontario Premier Doug Ford and remarks by U.S. Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra. Monday, Nov. 17, at 6 p.m. ET at Arcadian Court, 401 Bay Street, 8th Floor, Toronto. Details: amchamcanada.ca.

MONDAY, NOV. 17— TUESDAY, NOV. 18

Indo-Pacific Strategy Forum—The Institute for Peace & Diplomacy hosts the fifth Indo-Pacific Strategy Forum. Senior policymakers, economists, corporate executives, diplomats, and academic experts from across Canada, the United States, and the Indo-Pacific region will examine how Canada can recalibrate its Indo-Pacific approach amidst shifting geopolitical and economic headwinds. Monday, Nov. 17, to Tuesday, Nov. 18, in downtown Ottawa. Details: peacediplomacy.org.

TUESDAY, NOV. 18

Report Launch: *A New Canadian Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean*—The Canadian Council for the Americas will launch its new report, *Beyond the Build: A New Canadian Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean*. Executive committee members Dr. Janice Stein, Jonathan Hausman, Amanda Lang, Ken Frankel, and Marta Blackwell; and principal authors Eric Miller, John Price, and Doug Saunders will provide comments. A Q&A session will follow. Tuesday, Nov. 18 at 10 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. RSVP by Nov. 7: marta.blackwell@ccaacanada.com.

PSAC Day on the Hill—Join the Public Service Alliance of Canada and representatives of its nearly 240,000 workers in celebration of the public service. Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Ottawa Marriott Hotel, 100 Kent St. Register via Eventbrite.

Timothy Caulfield to Deliver IRPP Lecture—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts its fall lecture featuring University of Alberta professor Timothy Caulfield on "How to Escape the Fake: Making Good Policy in the Age of Misinformation." Reception to follow. Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 5 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

Ottawa Launch of Sergio Marchi's Book—Join former Liberal cabinet minister Sergio Marchi for the Ottawa launch of his new book, *Pursuing a Public Life*. Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 7 p.m. ET, at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

Lecture: 'The Secret Sauce of Canadian Immigration'—In the second of three 2025 McGill Max Bell Lectures, *Globe and Mail* columnist Tony Keller explores how modern Canada built an economically successful, politically popular immigration system, and what went wrong after 2015. Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 5 p.m. AT at the Canadian Museum of Immigration, Pier 21, 1055 Marginal Rd., Halifax. Details: mcgill.ca.

TUESDAY, NOV. 18— THURSDAY, NOV. 20

King of Sweden's State Visit—Their Majesties King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden will undertake a state visit to Canada from Tuesday, Nov. 18 to Thursday, Nov. 20. They will visit Ottawa and Montreal. Details to follow.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 19

Bacon and Eggheads Breakfast—The Partnership Group for Science and Engineering hosts its Bacon and Eggheads breakfast series, showcasing excellent Canadian research to key decision-makers. Dr. Jill Harvey from Thompson Rivers University will share insights from her research on wildfire resilience. Wednesday, Nov. 19, at 7:30 a.m. ET in Room 100, Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.