



Divide and conquer?

Canada, China, and the EV tariff

HENRY CHAN p. 25



Les Whittington

p. 6



Identifying Culture Minister Guilbeault's team

HILL CLIMBERS p. 28



University and College Research Policy Briefing

pp. 15-24



Tim Powers

p. 9



Scott Taylor

p. 10



Erica Ifill

p. 11



THE HILL TIMES

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CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS

Canada taking 'necessary' steps to tap into European defence market with new security pacts amid U.S. tensions: observers

BY IREM KOCA

The Carney government is weaving new defence alliances across Europe by signing security pacts with NATO allies like Spain and Portugal to allow the exchange of classified military information, and open the door for Canadian firms to compete in European defence contracts. Observers say that while these deals are a "necessary" step, they also come with risks if not implemented properly.

Government Transformation, Public Works, and Procurement Minister Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Que.) and Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand (Oakville East, Ont.) announced the signing of General Security of Information Agreements (GSOIs) with Portugal on Sept. 16, and Spain on Sept. 9.

"This agreement with Portugal will not only protect the

Continued on page 4

NEWS

Carney sets out to repair Canada-Mexico strife ahead of CUSMA review



Prime Minister Mark Carney made his first trip to Mexico as a world leader last week. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

BY NEIL MOSS

Prime Minister Mark Carney's first visit to Mexico last week has the opposition lamenting a lack of progress, but observers see a chance for the rocky bilateral relationship to rebound.

While in Mexico on Sept. 18 and 19, Carney (Nepean, Ont.) and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum announced a "comprehensive strategic partnership" between the two countries to deepen trade and investment links, as well as developing infra-

structure corridors and creating a security dialogue.

Former Canadian ambassador to Mexico Graeme Clark said there is damage in the bilateral relationship that needs to be repaired.

Continued on page 12

NEWS

Canada remains at the 'wrong end of the data vacuum,' says Sen. Colin Deacon as Liberals preview AI, privacy legislation reboot

BY STUART BENSON

As the new artificial intelligence minister signals his government's plans to reboot its previous attempt to update the country's privacy regime and regulate AI, CSG Senator Colin Deacon says Canada remains at the "wrong end of the data vacuum" as the increasingly ubiquitous and poorly regulated technology continues to Hoover up massive amounts of private information.

On Sept. 16, following the Liberals' cabinet meeting, AI and Digital Innovation Minister Evan Solomon (Toronto Centre, Ont.) hinted that the government is planning to introduce privacy and data legislation sometime this fall after the Liberal government's previous two attempts died on the Order Paper.

Continued on page 13

NEWS

Disability advocates launch 'Canada Disability Benefit diet' to highlight 'impossible choices' recipients face

BY STUART BENSON

As disability advocates call on the federal government to increase its "totally inadequate"

federal benefit regime ahead of this year's budget, the Daily Bread Food Bank has released a new campaign highlighting the "impossible choices" beneficia-

ries face living on \$7 per day and "legislated poverty."

Last week, those who qualify for the new Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) received their third

monthly payout. Yet, alongside issues with the rollout—including initial payment delays and miscalculated benefits—sources say even the maximum benefit of

\$200 per month falls far short of the stated goal of lifting significant numbers of Canadians with disabilities out of poverty.

NDP MP Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, Man.), her party's critic for people with disabilities, told *The Hill Times* that, in its current form, the CDB is "totally inadequate," and that despite

Continued on page 14

Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

Dr. Theresa Tam to give inaugural Monique Bégin lecture next month



Former chief public health officer Dr. Theresa Tam, left, will deliver a lecture on Oct. 30—the first in a series named in honour of former Liberal health minister Monique Bégin, right, who died in 2023. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia



October is Women's History Month, and to mark the occasion, the Women's History Project is launching a new annual lecture series, which will feature former chief public health officer Dr. **Theresa Tam** in Ottawa on Oct. 30. The series is named in honour of former Liberal cabinet minister **Monique Bégin** who died in 2023, aged 87.

Debra Davis, president and co-founder of the Women's History Project, told **Heard on the Hill** by email on Sept. 18 that her team was inspired by Bégin's "extraordinary legacy" advocating for women and the health of all Canadians. She hopes this lecture series will "spark dialogue on the critical issues facing women in Canada—past, present, and future."

Bégin served as then-prime minister **Pierre Trudeau**'s health and welfare minister from 1980 to 1984, during which time she introduced the Canada Health Act, the legislation that continues to shape the country's health system today.

The theme of this year's Women's History Month is "Women and Social Determinants of Health," which "reflects a cause deeply tied to Monique's life's work," said Davis.

"While health is shaped by many economic, social, and political factors, gender remains a driver of inequality—something Monique recognized and challenged throughout her career," Davis explained. "This lecture honours her vision by fostering dialogue that continues her fight for a fairer, healthier Canada."

So it's no surprise that Canada's erstwhile chief public health officer will be delivering the first Bégin lecture.

Tam recently wrapped up her tenure as head of the Canadian Public Health Agency, a role she'd held since 2017. She led the agency during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the SARS, H1N1, Ebola, and MERS outbreaks. Throughout her career, she's championed evidence-based decision-making, strengthened Canada's emergency preparedness and response, and advanced health equity.

"Her leadership has left a lasting impact on public health in Canada and globally," said Davis.

The Monique Bégin lecture is scheduled to take place on Oct. 30 at the University of Ottawa's Lees Campus.

Bob Rae welcomes his predecessor and successor to UN in New York



UN envoys past, present, and future: Marc-André Blanchard, left, Bob Rae, and David Lametti in New York on Sept. 21. *Photograph courtesy of X*

Two days after it was announced that former Liberal cabinet minister **David Lametti** would be Canada's next ambassador to the United Nations, the current envoy posted a photo with his successor and his predecessor—both of whom have worked together in Prime Minister **Mark Carney**'s office.

"Welcomed the Prime Minister, my predecessor, and my successor at the Canadian Mission today before our very successful meeting with [UN Secretary General **António**] **Guterres** this afternoon," posted outgoing UN ambassador **Bob Rae** on X on Sept. 21 with a photo of himself, **Marc-André Blanchard**, and **Lametti**.

Other photos in the series show Carney and **Tom Clark**,

Canada's consul general to New York, with the trio.

Currently Carney's chief of staff, **Blanchard** served as Canada's ambassador to the UN from 2016 to 2020.

Lametti joined the PMO this past July as Carney's principal secretary. Prior to that, he'd been a Liberal MP from 2015 to 2023, and was then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau**'s justice minister from January 2019 until July 2023.

In addition to **Lametti**'s appointment, Carney announced last week that career diplomat **Vera Alexander** will be this country's next ambassador to Germany, a role which has been vacant since then-ambassador and former British Columbia premier **John Horgan** died on Nov. 12, 2024.

Avi Lewis launches NDP leadership bid

Avi Lewis has officially entered the race to become the next leader of the New Democratic Party, announcing his candidacy on Sept. 19.

"I'm running for NDP leader so we can transform a system rigged for the rich—together. We need a government that serves the many, not the money," the 58-year-old journalist and activist said in his campaign launch video on social media last week.

Dressed in a short-sleeved blue linen shirt, **Lewis** speaks directly to the camera in a **Rick Mercer**-style rant, listing the current inequalities and issues plaguing Canadians, spliced with news footage of current events as well as archival content of a younger **Lewis** interviewing a medley of Canadian politicians, including former prime minister **Jean Chrétien**, former Conservative cabinet minister and ex-Alberta premier **Jason Kenney**, and Ontario Premier **Doug Ford**.

He also flexes his family's roots with the federal left-wing party: "In the 1970s, my grandfa-

ther, **David Lewis**, one of the founders of the NDP, said it well:

"The government and big business both hold hands in your pocket." His generation refused to accept a rotten deal," explained **Avi**.

"That's the tradition of struggle I was raised in ... now I want to stand with you and anyone who believes that the job of government is to

goddamn govern."

Unlike his grandfather and father **Stephen Lewis**—who led the Ontario NDP for most of the 1970s—the younger **Lewis** has yet to hold public office, despite having run twice in British Columbia ridings in two federal elections, most recently placing third to incumbent Liberal MP **Hedy Fry** in her long-held riding of Vancouver Centre.

Lewis joins a fledgling group of declared leadership candidates that includes Alberta NDP MP **Heather McPherson** and **Rob Ashton**, president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, who are officially listed as candidates on the Elections Canada website. As of Sept. 22, **Lewis**' name was not yet on that list.

Privacy chief Dufresne elected chair of Global Privacy Assembly



Privacy Commissioner of Canada **Philippe Dufresne** in Ottawa on June 17. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada's privacy commissioner **Philippe Dufresne** was elected to chair the Global Privacy Assembly during the 47th Global Privacy Assembly conference in Seoul, South Korea, last week.

The Global Privacy Assembly is an international forum of more than 130 data protection and privacy authorities and observers from around the world, providing global leadership in data protection and privacy.

"This is a pivotal moment for privacy in Canada and around the world," said **Dufresne** in a Sept. 19 press release announcing his two-year chairmanship. "I look forward to working with all the members of the Global Privacy Assembly. By prioritizing collaboration and leveraging our combined capabilities, resources, and expertise, we can maximize our collective efforts to shape a future where innovation can flourish, privacy rights are respected, and trust is reinforced."

Natan Obed re-elected as ITK president



Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami president **Natan Obed** was re-elected on Sept. 18. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Natan Obed was re-elected for a fourth term as Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's president last week.

Thirteen representatives of the groups that make up the ITK's board voted during its annual general meeting in Cambridge Bay, Nvt., on Sept. 18. **Obed** faced one opponent: former CBC North managing editor **Kevin Kablutsiak**, according to *Nunatsiag News*.

Obed was first elected in 2015, re-elected in 2018, and was acclaimed in 2021. While he'd initially said in 2021 that he wouldn't run again, the politician from Nain, Nunatsiavut, changed his mind back in July, saying then "I wish to continue in my role during these turbulent times."

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The Hill Times

Opportunity to Strengthen Canada's Charitable Sector

To: **The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P.**
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A3

cc: **All Members of the PMO**

cc: **The Honourable Pierre Poilievre**
Conservative Leader

cc: **All Conservative MPs and all Senators**

To: **The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P.**
Minister of Finance
80 Wellington Street

cc: **All Liberal MPs and all Senators**

cc: **The Honourable Yves-François Blanchet MP**
Bloc Québécois Leader

cc: **All Bloc Québécois MPs and all Senators**

Dear Prime Minister and Minister of Finance,

"Fall Budget Opportunity to Strengthen Canada's Charitable Sector"

Hospitals, universities, social service agencies, and arts and cultural organizations across Canada are facing significant fiscal challenges during these difficult times.

It took our team approximately 11 years (from 1995 to 2006) to persuade both Liberal and Conservative governments to eliminate the capital gains tax on charitable donations of publicly listed securities. Since that policy change in 2006, Canadian charities have received over \$1 billion in gifts of listed securities virtually every year.

In the United States, donations of appreciated capital property—such as listed securities, private company shares, and real estate—are exempt from capital gains tax. If your upcoming budget were to adopt a similar measure by removing the capital gains tax on donations of private company shares and real estate, Canadian charities could receive an estimated additional \$200 million in funding annually.

While some may view this as a tax benefit for the wealthy, it is more accurately described as removing a significant barrier to charitable giving. Any concerns regarding valuation abuse are addressed by the condition that the donor must sell the assets to an arm's length party. If they donate all or a portion of the cash proceeds to a registered charity within 30 days, they are exempt from capital gains tax on that donation. The true beneficiaries are the millions of Canadians who rely on the essential services provided by our charitable sector.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Donald K. Johnson, O.C., LL.D.

Donald K. Johnson O.C.
Director, UHN Foundation
Chair, Vision Campaign, Toronto Western Hospital
Member, Advisory Board, Ivey Business School, Western University
Chairman Emeritus & Director, Business / Arts
Member, 2025 Major Individual Giving Cabinet, United Way Greater
Toronto Member, Honourary Board, The National Ballet of Canada

NEWS

Canada taking ‘necessary’ steps to tap into European defence market with new security pacts amid U.S. tensions: observers

The newly signed pacts signal to Europe that Canada is serious in its efforts to shift some of its focus away from the American supply chain, says Christian Leuprecht.

Continued from page 1

exchange of sensitive information with a trusted NATO ally, it will also open new opportunities for Canadian businesses, support good jobs, and help grow our economies,” Lightbound said in a press release. The minister’s office did not respond to further questions by *The Hill Times* about the agreement.

GSOIAs create a legally binding framework for the exchange of classified information between the countries involved, including information about authorized contractors and government institutions. They also allow Canadian companies cleared under the Contract Security Program to access classified data necessary to bid on sensitive contracts abroad; and facilitate business opportunities for Canadian companies in sectors such as defence, security, aerospace, maritime, nuclear, and space. They are not related to specific procurements.

Since December 2024, Canada has also signed GSOIAs with Ukraine, Poland, and Japan.

These agreements are negotiated by Public Services and Procurement Canada in collaboration with Global Affairs Canada, and the Department of National Defence.

According to the government, Canada’s bilateral merchandise trade with Portugal exceeded \$3.2-billion in 2024, while two-way goods and services trade with Spain totalled \$7.9-billion.

Kim Richard Nossal, a professor emeritus in the department of political studies at Queen’s University, told *The Hill Times* the new security agreements are part of the Carney government’s broader push to diversify its economic and defence relationships so that Canada is not so overly dependent on the United States. This is also reflected in the recent agreement signed with the European Union, Nossal said.

In June, Canada signed a Security and Defence Partnership with the EU, the union’s



Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand, left, and Procurement Minister Joël Lightbound announced the signing of security pacts with two more European countries this month in an effort to diversify defence suppliers. *The Hill Times* photographs by Sam Garcia and Andrew Meade

first such pact with a country in the Americas. At the time, Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) said the agreement would “help deliver on capability targets more quickly and economically” for Canada and its allies.

That agreement paved the way for Ottawa to tap into the EU’s \$235-billion defence procurement program, Security Action for Europe (SAFE), designed to help countries invest in areas like missile defence, drones, and cybersecurity. It is also part of the massive \$1.25-trillion ReArm Europe/Readiness 2030 plan.

The actual impact of the new GSOIAs is unknown, but signing them is a “necessary first step” for a non-EU member like Canada to get its firms qualified to gain access to European-funded defence procurement projects, according to Nossal.

The fact that a number of such agreements have been signed with European countries, as well as with the EU itself, suggests that the Canadian government’s intent is to ensure that there will be comparable agreements across the EU, Nossal said.

“They also have a symbolic purpose: to signal what Canada hopes to achieve in diversification,” said Nossal, noting that many purchasing decisions will depend on the weapons systems Canada will need for its defence in the next decades.

Nicolas Todd, vice-president of government relations and communications at the Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries, agreed that GSOIAs are necessary preconditions for defence trade to occur.



Christian Leuprecht, a defence and national security expert, says Canada needs to show Europe it is serious in its efforts to build stronger defence ties. *Handout photograph*

“It is essential for Canada to sign these agreements with priority EU members for Canadian firms to participate in multinational projects with EU members under the EU’s SAFE initiative, or with NATO members,” he said, explaining that this would help firms understand Canada’s goals, military requirements, and who in government to contact, and would create a “community of interest” among industry partners.

New pacts signal to Europe that Canada is serious in its efforts, say observers

Christian Leuprecht, a defence and national security expert and Royal Military College and

Queen’s University professor, said the agreement allows for a more competitive bidding process.

“I am dumbfounded that we did not already have such agreements in place with a major European defence and tech supplier such as Spain. Shows how parochial and short-minded Canadian government thinking has been,” Leuprecht said.

Defence supply chains are highly diversified, especially for high-end tech, so a pivot to “Europe” really means a pivot to the “European Union,” Leuprecht said. This means if Canada wants to procure more European equipment it would need to establish GSOIAs with multiple EU member states.

“At a minimum, it’s a signal to European countries that Canada actually looks serious. The jury is still out on whether this government actually is serious. The BC Ferries deal suggests that it’s not,” Leuprecht said.

BC Ferries, a publicly owned company, awarded a contract to Chinese state-owned shipyard CMI Weihai to build four new ferries, backed by a \$1-billion federal loan through the Canada Infrastructure Bank. The House Transport Committee voted in July to study this controversy, and called on now-former transport minister Chrystia Freeland to testify before MPs as new e-mails reportedly revealed her department had notice of the purchase weeks ahead of time.

Describing it as a “misguided ferries buy-Chinese disaster underwritten by a \$1-billion federal loan,” Leuprecht said the news “was not missed on the EU.”

“It cost us yet more goodwill among European allies,” Leuprecht said.

Risks with over ‘over-diversifying’

Raquel Garbers, a visiting executive at the Centre for International Governance Innovation and former DND director general of strategic defence policy, said while it is difficult to predict what the impact of these agreements would be, their implementation will matter.

“It strikes me that the prime minister has already cut the strategic deal that we’re going to try and do more things together. The first step to that is ensuring that we can share information, and that’s what those agreements are generally about,” she said.

According to Garbers, the agreements are essentially administrative requirements for moving forward, and it will be up to companies to pursue projects and opportunities to benefit from them.

“Generally, these agreements deal with things like security clearances for personnel, document handling requirements, or cybersecurity. It’s not necessarily industry- or capability-specific,” she said.

Garbers, who is also a visiting practitioner with the U.S. Department of Defense, said that diversification is a great thing, and Canada needs a much more resilient—and a much larger—defence industrial base, but argued that there are risks to over-diversification and an over-pivot that would come with moving away from the U.S. too quickly.

An “over-pivot” of introducing new equipment with different standards and different operating rules could have a negative effect in terms of our ability to defend the continent, she argued, adding that which capabilities and munitions Canada can afford to diversify, and which must stay aligned with the U.S. should be considered.

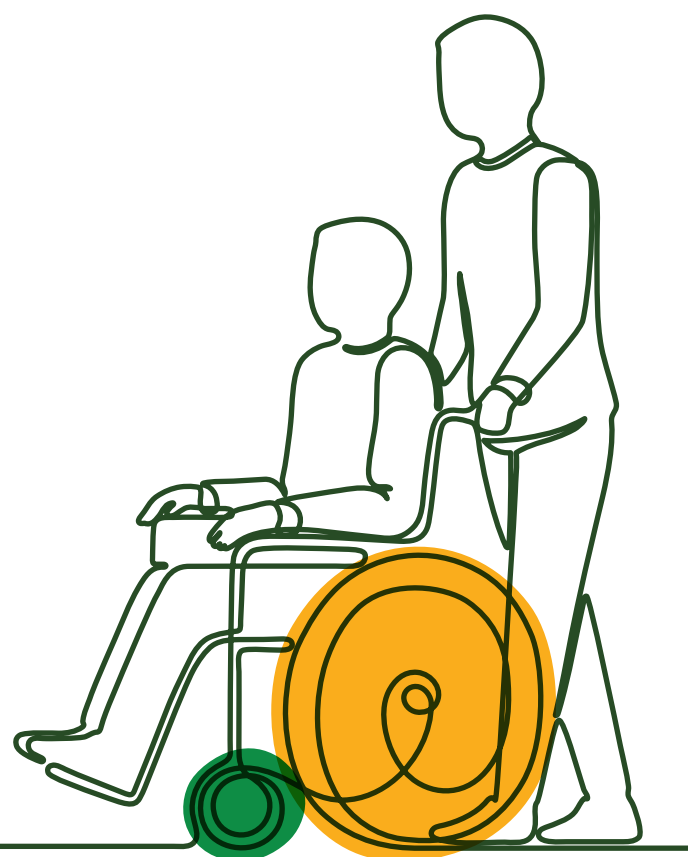
Those risks include security concerns with countries like China, which Garbers said uses economic warfare to weaken western military capabilities and political will. If European protections aren’t on par with the U.S., Canada might buy weapons that do not work with American systems due to security issues. Reliance on Europe could also jeopardize supply in the event of a conflict, as European countries might prioritize their own defence whereas the U.S. would likely prioritize Canada as part of the North American defence.

Though she warned of those risks generally, Garbers said Carney’s statements so far show that he understands the benefits of diversification as well as the importance of staying tightly connected with the U.S.

“I’m not worried that the prime minister is thinking of over-pivoting. What concerns me is the public commentary where we hear that it’s possible to replace our relationship with the United States with Europe,” she said.

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COMMENT



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre faces a leadership review this winter, so we shouldn't assume he'll suddenly begin prioritizing moderate, incremental, and fact-based politics, writes Les Whittington. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Waiting for the truckers to come back

A great deal has changed in federal politics in a few months, but Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre? Not so much.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—Here's news: it's understood that Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has adopted a different approach, and Conservative MPs are now free to meet with whomever they choose, and to travel outside their ridings for meetings.

This must be bracing for federally elected Conservatives, who seemed like an endangered species in the two-and-a-half years between Poilievre's elevation to party boss and the April election.

The about-face on muzzling his MPs has to be seen in the context of the widely discussed possibility that Poilievre might be rethinking his tactics in hopes of widening his party's voter base before Canadians next go to the polls.

Still, he faces a leadership review this winter from the members of the party that he has over the years helped morph into something closer to the People's Party of Canada than the conservative organizations of old. So we shouldn't assume that the Poilievre who has sought to capitalize on the MAGA-style, right-wing upsurge in western democracies will suddenly begin prioritizing moderate, incremental, and fact-based politics.

Will it be very long, for instance, before we start hearing more complaints from the Conservative standard-bearer

about such issues as the previous Liberal government's ban on plastic straws?

Poilievre has exhibited no reluctance over the past year in trying to capitalize on this absurd culture-war wedge issue cherished by the likes of United States President Donald Trump, who officially reinstituted plastic straws after returning to the White House. (The Trudeau government's prohibition on plastic straws—part of a 2022 program to eliminate some single-use plastics—is still before the courts.) “This isn't about science, it's about symbolism,” Poilievre said during the recent election campaign as he vowed to end the ban here. “They [the Liberals] are not about saving the planet, they're about punishing all of us to make themselves feel good.”

Or will we be hearing again about the social media conspiracy alleging that globalists like Prime Minister Mark Carney are part of an elitist plot to make everyone exist on a diet of insects? “Justin Trudeau bet \$9 million of

your money on edible BUGS! He wants Canadians to own nothing, be happy and eat crickets,” the party said in a fundraising email in November 2024. It came after the Liberal government provided funds to a company that farms crickets for pet food. The Conservative hysterics echoed standard online innuendo about the evil World Economic Forum, which the party's current leader has regularly vilified.

Whatever tone he might adopt as the Commons continues, Poilievre—who since 2022 has exploited an angry populist rage-fest to generate a powerful anti-Trudeau coalition—isn't straying from his post-truth diatribes against the Liberals. He is still highlighting a hard-edged agenda larded with twisted or false information and divisive dog-whistles. And all of Canada's problems—from housing prices to crime—continue to be simplistically blamed on the Liberal leader (substitute Carney for Trudeau here) as if there were no other levels of government or any economic market forces at play in this country.

Indeed, Poilievre seems quite at home with the idea that nobody really cares about accurate, reliable information in an era of performative, emotion-fueled politics. He said during the election, for instance, that Carney would bring back the consumer carbon tax if the Liberals were re-elected. As that didn't happen, the Conservative leader is now saying the fact that Carney hasn't dropped Trudeau's emissions cap regulations amounts to a new carbon tax.

On energy, he continues to say the Liberals have deprived Canadians of their rightful natural resource riches, claiming misleadingly that Trudeau was solely

responsible for the demise of the Northern Gateway and Energy East pipeline proposals.

With regard to the Conservatives' argument that the new Liberal government has presided over a declining economy and an exit of business investment, Poilievre never bothers to mention that Carney is dealing with an economy battered by a once-in-75-years tariff attack by the Americans.

The Conservative leader is also tapping into—and likely further inflaming—Canadians' growing antipathy toward immigrants, saying the Temporary Foreign Workers Program is depriving youth of jobs and should be axed. Poilievre asserted that the number of people coming into Canada under the program was running wild in 2025. But it turns out this claim was based on a misinterpretation of stats showing the opposite.

Watching Poilievre over the summer, he seemed—as many have mentioned—to appear more than anything like someone who has been unable to process a major unfortunate event in their life, i.e., what happened on April 28.

Following the Trump model, he had managed as leader to construct a winning formula based on grievance trolling, sloganeering, and, above all, demonizing Trudeau. But Carney's arrival short-circuited that strategy. So a great deal has changed in federal politics in a few months, but Poilievre? Not so much. As ever, he appears to be litigating a kind of upmarket, long-running version of the inchoate hate and frustration exhibited by the trucker convoy that took over Ottawa way back in 2022.

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

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Editorial

Editorial

Alarms are ringing—again—over Canada’s climate progress

There’s a lot going on these days, and a lot to contend with—for citizens and government alike.

Since kicking off September with the usual fall cabinet retreat—sorry, “Cabinet Planning Forum”—ahead of the House of Commons’ return on Sept. 15, Prime Minister Mark Carney has so far this month announced a new “Buy Canadian” policy in Toronto, and \$80-million in tariff relief for Atlantic businesses while in St. John’s, N.L. Among other things, he’s also launched the Build Canada Homes agency, and made a two-day trip south to strengthen ties with Mexico.

In the House Chamber, the first week of the fall sitting saw the government’s Citizenship Act changes in Bill C-3—necessitated by an Ontario Superior Court ruling—as well as the contentious, omnibus Strong Borders Act, Bill C-2, take the spotlight.

But clarity on Canada’s commitment to our international climate pledges—most notably the emissions-reduction targets agreed to through the Paris Agreement—has been decidedly absent.

Instead, what we have heard are further alarms over our flagging progress in the fight against climate change.

An early 2024 emissions estimate released by the Canadian Climate Institute on Sept. 18 found progress on emissions reductions in this country “flat-lined” in 2024, “with emissions essentially unchanged from the previous year.”

“This lack of progress in 2024 is concerning given the significant setbacks in policy, at both the federal and provincial level, since that year,” reads the release.

Those setbacks include the Carney government’s decision to repeal the consumer carbon tax, and to pause the federal mandate requiring 20 per cent of all new vehicles sold in Canada to be electric by 2026.

“These changes threaten fragile progress on the emissions front, while record oilsands production and multiple liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities under construction will put upward pressure on national emissions,” it continues.

Based on the analysis, Canada is on track to reduce emissions by 20 to 25 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030—far short of its commitment of 40 to 45 per cent reductions by the same time frame. Carney’s environment minister recently acknowledged the “next steps will be very hard” ahead of those targets, while still not being clear on Canada’s plan.

Data released by Environment and Climate Change Canada on Sept. 17 underscores the very real stakes—and consequences—of our lack of sufficient progress to date in this generational challenge. Scientists assessing the 10 hottest heat waves to impact Canada this summer—in July and August—found nine “were made much more likely because of climate change.”

Tariffs threaten livelihoods, but climate change threatens our very existence—regardless of how top-of-mind the issue may be for Canadians.

The feds have signalled they’ll release a “climate competitiveness strategy” later this year. Let’s hope that comes sooner than later, and brings real reassurance with it.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor



Standing up in a darkening world

All around the world, the fundamentals of liberal democracy are rapidly being discarded. And as governments become increasingly hostile and bellicose, those with less are mockingly abandoned to their fate. What this means internationally is that those who still stand for higher principles, like Canada, must take on the burdens abandoned by others.

The Global Fund provides basic health services for many hundreds of millions of people, and is due for funding replenishment this year. The United States and others have withdrawn support for this critical work, so Canada must step forward.

It’s more than just money; it’s about the kind of world we want to live in—one where belligerent governments watch impassively while treatable disease sweeps the world, or one where good people come to the aid of suffering neighbours. Without a doubt, I know which group Canada remains a part.

Nathaniel Poole
Victoria, B.C.

Canada has already failed the Gaza test, says reader

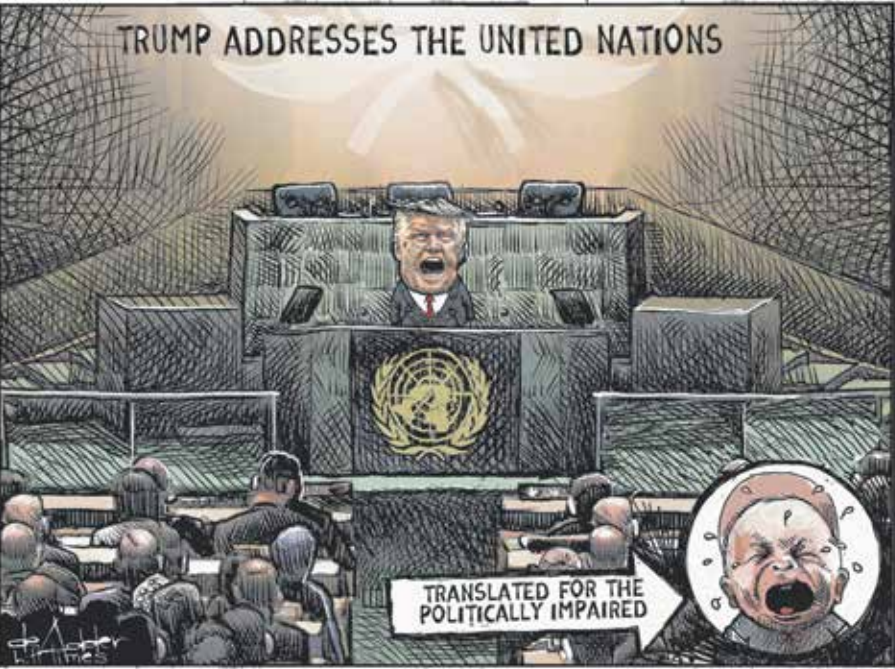
Re: “Gaza is testing Canada’s moral compass, and Carney’s credibility,” (*The Hill Times*, Sept. 15, p. 32).

Unfortunately, Canada has already failed the Gaza test and Prime Minister Mark Carney has already lost all credibility and abandoned the high moral ground. One has to be intellectually bankrupt not to recognize that providing the butchers who burned and beheaded babies and raped women with a state from which to continue these barbaric actions is rewarding and sanctioning their actions. One has to be politically naive to recognize a Palestinian state based upon promises by the Palestinian leaders—leaders who to date have never kept a promise, and who are committed to the destruction of Israel.

The issue is not how many Palestinians have died, but who is accountable for their deaths. That answer is indisputable. It was Hamas that broke the ceasefire on Oct. 7, 2023, knowing full well that Israel would respond exactly as it has. Hamas counted upon the weakness of countries such as Canada and people such as Bhagwant Sandhu to ignore the truth and facts, and plead the case of the barbarians.

Contrary to Mr. Sandhu’s claim, Israel has no intent to dominate, dispossess, or indefinitely occupy other people. Frankly, all that it wants is to live in peace with its neighbours. On the other hand, all that its neighbours want is to live in peace without an Israel. Mr. Sandhu’s comments and the Canadian government’s actions leave no doubt as to their allegiances.

Alan Williams
Ottawa, Ont.



COMMENT

Want to tackle national pride? Give Canadian women's rugby a try

As Canada's senior women's rugby squad heads into a World Cup final, the country can take a lesson from their passionate and disciplined approach.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



The Canadian women's rugby team will take on England at the World Cup finals on Sept. 27. Screenshot courtesy of YouTube/Rugby World Cup

OTTAWA—Plenty has been said about “elbows up,” “Canada Strong,” “support local,” and many other key phrases meant to symbolize a proud, vibrant Canada that takes a back seat to no one. We are fortunate we have a living example of this sentiment representing our country so well in a global sports arena.

The team many of you have not likely heard of but should know and should cheer loudly for this coming weekend is Canada's national senior women's rugby squad. They will be playing against England this weekend in

London in the final of the Women's World Cup of Rugby. They are the team that can become world champions, and regardless of whether they do, are an aspirational model not just for athletes, but also for everyone.

Canada has been to a World Cup final before in 2014, and came away with a silver medal. We are also current Olympic silver medal holders in the sport of rugby sevens. Some members of that team are in this World Cup team.

Some of the players in this current final representing Can-

ada were on the squad when they were required to pay some of their own money to put on a national jersey. While that is no longer the case, the same “we are going to commit whatever it takes to get it done” attitude—even if it includes money from our own wallets—still drives the team. In a very refreshing way, this team just goes about getting things done and solving problems rather than creating them.

They needed more funding to prepare for this World Cup so they started their own “Mission:

Win the World Cup” campaign to raise \$1-million on top of the funding they get. Last I checked, they were near to the target as many people responded to their call. Unlike their opponent England—whose squad is funded at levels many multiples higher than Canada—this team, to borrow Prime Minister Mark Carney's words, were effectively investing more and spending much less than the competition. While the Canadian sport system as a whole could use more investment, this team didn't have time to wait.

In their journey to the final, Canada cast off current World Cup holders New Zealand in historical fashion. Canada had only previously once beaten and tied the New Zealand Black Ferns. On Sept. 19, they dispatched their opponent in a clinical, forceful, and determined way giving the Black Ferns their most significant World Cup loss ever.

With players from all parts of the country, most of whom came from the university sports system, the Canadians are a group of well-educated athletes—many of whom have put other careers on hold to pursue this dream. While there are now professional women's rugby leagues, the salaries are not yet at a level where financial security is achieved once an athlete's playing career is done.

You can probably count on one hand without using all your fingers the non-ice-based world championships Canadian teams have won in global competitions. That is why what is happening in England now and could happen on Sept. 27 is so special.

Watch this team. Watch these athletes. They are fast and furious. Yet, at the same time, methodical and disciplined. They are proud and passionate. They aren't just happy to be there; they are determined to win. They are the best of Canada in a time when we need to see that showcased. Stand with them on Saturday and going forward. You won't regret it.

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

Next stop for me, the feds, and many others: the Supreme Court

If the Charter of Rights and Freedoms doesn't protect us, the anglophone community's very role in Quebec society is threatened.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—The Carney government is getting its share of notice for inviting itself to the Supreme Court appeal of Quebec's Bill 21, “An Act respecting the laicity of the State.” It will not be challenging the law itself, but rather will be seeking some answers on the frequent and pre-emptive use

of Section 33 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, known by its nickname, “the notwithstanding clause.”

No one knows when the case will be heard, but speculation is spring of 2026. The original case pitted the English Montreal School Board (EMSB) against the Quebec government over Bill 21's prohibition of the wearing of religious symbols by teachers. As the Legault government applied Sec. 33 when Bill 21 was passed, and renewed it in 2024, it has become the focal point of the case. The EMSB has now been joined by dozens of other interveners, as well as the federal government.

This includes the organization I lead, the Task Force on Linguistic Policy, which submitted a brief—or factum—as an intervener. It is a novel approach focused on the notwithstanding clause: the factum argues that rights and freedoms in Canada are to be interpreted as they existed before the patriation of the Constitution in 1982.

If our arguments are accepted by the Supreme Court, no Cana-

dian legislature could ever use the notwithstanding clause to abolish rights and freedoms. This could be the most important court case since Confederation; in fact, our case is the only one of 38 cases that raises this important constitutional argument.

As all English-speaking Quebecers know, the Coalition Avenir Québec government of François Legault has pre-emptively applied Sec. 33 on several occasions, most notably in the passage of Bill 96, the amendments to the Charter of the French Language.

Our factum, drafted by distinguished Montreal lawyer Michael Bergman, calls upon the legal traditions of Canadian justice. The brief underlines that Canada has a Constitution like the United Kingdom, with statutes and unwritten constitutional principles that impose limits on a legislature's ability to abolish fundamental rights. However, Canada is the only country in the world with a “notwithstanding clause.”

The factum says “Section 33, on its invocation, does not abol-

ish, repeal or abridge Canadian fundamental rights and freedoms as they stood prior to the enactment of [the Constitution] in 1982. Therefore, in the face of the proper invocation of Section 33, the Courts retain the authority to apply the unwritten constitutional principles, conventions, customs, traditions, as well as the common law and the binding commitments of the Crown.”

The Task Force is asking the court to confirm using Sec. 33 does not cancel all basic rights. It is not seeking costs or any special court orders, only clarification that basic rights survive. Why is it doing this? In opposition of the use of the notwithstanding clause in Bill 96. That said, legal cases cost money, and the Task Force does not have a bottomless pit of government money to do its work.

If the Charter of Rights and Freedoms doesn't protect us, the anglophone community's very role in Quebec society is threatened. As prominent anglophone Eric Maldoff said in June, “the notwithstanding clause in itself is an affront to the rule of law.

It's the governments being able to say, with a stroke of a pen, your rights don't exist, we can do whatever we want.”

In response to the federal decision to intervene, former Quebec education minister Jean-François Roberge tweeted: “The sovereignty clause”—as he likes to call Sec. 33—“is a perfectly legitimate tool available to elected officials. All governments have used it over the past 50 years.” Of course, the Charter has only been in force 40 years, so he really needs to do his homework.

While the Legault government appears to be on its last legs, it still has another year before the next Quebec election to do substantial damage. It has promised to bring in a Quebec constitution, which, in tandem with Bill 96, Bill 21, and Bill 84, would define who is a Quebecer and how everyone should integrate into the “official Quebec culture.”

All this judicial and political activity seems to indicate a tumultuous fall and winter in Quebec. As we say here, “Attache ta tuque!”

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

The Hill Times

COMMENT



Canadian soldiers take part in Exercise Resolute Warrior in Latvia in 2024. A House of Commons committee recently heard that the Canadian Army does not have enough vehicles to support the forward deployed NATO mission in Latvia and conduct a similar-sized training exercise in Canada, writes Scott Taylor. Photograph courtesy of the Department of National Defence/ Cpl. Marc-André Leclerc

CAF leadership lacks courage

It's the responsibility of military brass to pound on the desks of their political masters to address shortcomings in the institution. Instead, they sugar coat the situation.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—Anyone even remotely connected to the Canadian Armed Forces knows that they are in a woeful state at present.

A multitude of recent media reports have detailed how the lack of trained personnel, spare parts, and the advanced age of equipment, vehicles, and weapon systems has resulted in nearly 50 per cent of Canada's arsenal being unserviceable at any given point in time.

This dismal readiness result pertains equally to all three ser-

vice branches: the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), Royal Canadian Air Force, and the Canadian Army.

No one knows the extent of this crisis better than the senior leadership who have to cut corners in order to try and meet their operational obligations. It is also the responsibility of those brass hats to pound on the desks of their political masters to address the existing shortcomings in the institution.

But the problem is that these Canadian generals instead choose to sugar coat the situation when advising parliamentary committees.

On Sept. 18, Maj.-Gen. Robert Ritchie, the director of the strategic joint staff, appeared before a House of Commons committee. In short, Ritchie told the committee that the Canadian Army does not have enough vehicles to support the forward deployed NATO mission in Latvia and conduct a similar-sized training exercise in Canada. To recap: since 2017, Canada has deployed a battle group to Camp Adazi in Latvia as part of a multi-national NATO brigade that's part of the alliance's Operation Reassurance. The number of Canadians deployed has steadily grown from an initial 850 to the current 2,200. That number is to swell to 2,600 by 2026.

Until the spring of 2024, those Canadian troops preparing to deploy to Latvia would conduct a full-scale, brigade-level combined arms proving exercise at CFB Wainwright in Alberta. Due to a shortage of funds, spare parts, and personnel, those proving exercises were discontinued, with the military leadership claiming they were unnecessary anyway.

The brass' explanation at the time was that the troops could get on-the-job training once they arrived in Latvia alongside the Russian border.

Now we learn from Ritchie's testimony that the Canadian Army no longer has the capacity to conduct such proving exercises on a brigade-level scale. With more than 400 vehicles of all types now parked at Camp Adazi, there aren't enough roadworthy vehicles left in Canada to do such training.

With everything we own in the storefront window, Ritchie still tried to put a rosy spin on the situation. "We do not have a mirror complement of that equipment in Canada, nor is it required," Ritchie testified, making reference to the policy change implemented last year. "The vehicles that the individuals are using for that [Latvia] deployment are the ones that they need to conduct the pre-deployment training on so that they understand the systems,

and have the trust and confidence in using that equipment."

Which would seemingly support the very need for a proving exercise prior to deployment.

However, Ritchie pressed ahead to further defend the decision to do the combined arms training in Latvia, saying soldiers are getting training on the ground and in the conditions in which they might have to fight. "There is a deterrence effect by virtue of conducting the training in location on the front line for which the multinational group is defending," Ritchie said.

He added that a "conglomerate of reasons have led us to the decision to move the pre-deployment training to Latvia, which was exceptionally well received by Latvia and all the allies."

There you have it folks: the silver lining, if you will. We do not have the equipment, the vehicles, the spare parts, or the personnel to conduct an exercise in Canada, but it pleases the Latvians to do that training on their soil and it scares the bejeezus out of the Russians across the border.

Sadly for Ritchie, the on-the-job training in Latvia is not going as swimmingly as he would have his political masters believe. According to documents obtained by the CBC, during the most recent deployment, Canadian soldiers did not have a "venue during workup training." It continued: "This required a more academic approach to preparations" for the major NATO brigade exercise known as Oak Resolve.

In other words, more of a classroom instructional than a combined arms tactical affair with tanks, artillery, and tactical air assets.

During Prime Minister Mark Carney's visit to the troops in Camp Adazi last month, journalists accompanying him were

advised by disgruntled soldiers that much of the shiny hardware on display was in fact unserviceable. Despite the fact that the forward deployed brigade group is a top priority for spare parts in the supply chain, they still have roughly 30 per cent of vehicles listed as "off-road" or inoperable. This includes Canada's few remaining Leopard 2 main battle tanks.

Some could argue that by putting a positive spin on the situation, Ritchie is merely being a loyal foot soldier. He is making do with what he has.

We saw this in 2002 when we first deployed a battle group to Afghanistan. We did not have desert camouflage uniforms to equip them, so the Army generals told the media this was a good thing as the dark forest green camouflage uniforms would make the Canadians stand out as Canadian. You could not make this stuff up.

However, it does not need to be like this. In December 2023, Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee issued a video statement regarding the state of Canada's navy, and it was the blunt truth. "Colleagues and shipmates, the RCN faces some very serious challenges right now that could mean we fail to meet our force posture and readiness commitments in 2024 and beyond. This situation is serious, but our problems are not unique, and I know that the Air Force and the Army are facing similar challenges."

Topshee was right. The RCN has still not righted the ship completely, but at least his sailors know that he had the guts to speak truth to power.

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

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Carney is failing to make the grade

The prime minister is doing well on the leadership front relative to his opponents, but his early stats on community outreach, combatting fascism, and Indigenous reconciliation are poor.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



OTTAWA—It's time for Prime Minister Mark Carney's first performance review. Throughout the summer, Carney has moved at a steady clip to reorient Canada towards an economy that's less reliant on the United States. Given President Donald Trump's mercurial, capricious, and, at times, TACO behaviour (shorthand for Trump Always Chickens Out, derived from Wall Street bros, meaning he always flip-flops on his threats of economic retaliation), the promise of "elbows up" is still in the air. Carney is betting that his recent policies, as well as a tax cut, will be a panacea to all social ills, impending economic decline, and rising price levels. Hot tip: it will not, at least not adequately.

Leadership: B

Carney has shown that his leadership of the Liberals was the main attribute he had over Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre. However, it has made Canada an international lighthouse, antithetical to American economic aggression. Poilievre, on the other hand, is incapable of rising to the moment and pivoting to meet changing political environments. He is inept at meeting Carney at the policy level, which has proved that the only value he can add to the legislative process is constant whining.

Community outreach: D

While Carney restored Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) to its original command as a full ministry, after dropping it altogether in his interim cabinet, the department may be facing some of the biggest cuts by proportion. Through GC InfoBase, it is estimated that spending on WAGE will decrease by at least 76 per cent by 2027-28. WAGE is also the ministry responsible for LGBTQ programming support. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives calculated that gender identity funding, "effectively falls to zero by 2027-28 (at \$1.9-million)." It is egregiously insulting that the Carney government can introduce such carnage to major blocs that voted for it. *The Conversation* concludes that "women supported the Liberal Party by a 25-point margin." Women were instrumental in the Carney government's rise to power, despite the prime minister's politically underdeveloped stature.

Rise of fascism and white supremacy: D-

He's lucky I didn't give him an F. Non-white people, people with disabilities, and Islamophobia don't exist to this government. I have not heard one thing of real



There is a lack of substance about breaking down systemic barriers for the more equitable economic advancement Prime Minister Mark Carney is pursuing, writes Erica Ifill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

substance about breaking down systemic barriers for the more equitable economic advancement the prime minister is pursuing. Instead, Carney is laying the foundation for the rise in fascism and white supremacy.

Case in point, if you've ever read Project 2025—concocted and written by American right-wing think tank The Heritage Foundation—you know that this is a roadmap to Trump's full intentions to starve the U.S. government, transfer resources from the public sector to the private one, and subjugate women and marginalized communities; it is the blueprint for a white, Christian country where the power is concentrated in the hands of the few. In the political environment of rising Christo-fascism, Carney's team invited the architect of this document, Heritage Foundation president Kevin Roberts, to speak to cabinet earlier this month. Ostensibly, the meeting was to get advice on Trump's playbook when they could've just read Trump's playbook. Although eventually cancelled, it was only done so—on Roberts' side—after massive pushback. I can only imagine how marginalized staffers must feel.

After an impassioned speech by Lethbridge, Alta., Conservative MP Rachael Thomas on Sept. 15 that excused notorious right-wing bigot Charlie Kirk's white supremacy under the guise of support for freedom of speech, "ideas that we disagree with," and "views that may be offensive," Carney also rose in the House of Commons to clap for Kirk. The PM had previously released a tweet condemning Kirk's death, contextualizing it as his murder being retaliation for his political views. Hate is not a political view, and I don't know why I have to say this.

Indigenous sovereignty: D-

I can see that reconciliation is dead. For Carney to realize his nation-building, militaristic vision, he must steamroll over Indigenous rights. There is no other way. Even though Carney pledges to make First Nations partners in prosperity, the reality is they've never been full partners or received equitable power to Canada's settler colonialism. I don't see why Carney would start now.

Summer meetings with various Indigenous representatives have gone to hell with some leaving governmental meetings in disgust. *The Guardian* reported in July: "First Nations leaders have walked out of a meeting with Mark Carney" at his event to promote the Building Canada Act, or Bill

C-5. In the summer, I wrote in this paper: "Bill C-5 references respecting [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples], but only spells out a need to 'consult,' not 'free, prior, and informed consent,' which is a mechanism intended for Indigenous nations to have the power to shape decisions that affect their rights and livelihoods."

First Nations don't have veto power on these projects that will be constructed on

their land, with the toxic waste and run-off externalities paid for by their communities. I also haven't heard any regulations proposed that would mitigate this almost-certain event. Let's be real, even if First Nations do object, the government will build anyway, and send the police to physically quell any opposition.

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

The Hill Times

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Session II
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Rt. Hon. Richard Wagner, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada
Hon. Mahmud Jamal, Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada
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THE HILL TIMES

NEWS

Carney sets out to repair Canada-Mexico strife ahead of CUSMA review

The Conservative Party has criticized Prime Minister Mark Carney for not getting a more tangible result during his recent trip to Mexico.

Continued from page 1

“Let’s hope that this goes some way to addressing that,” said Clark of the new partnership.

Some of the ill will stems from a couple of the provincial premiers pointing to Mexico as the country with which the United States should be concerned when American President Donald Trump criticized Canada for fentanyl and border issues. Ontario Premier Doug Ford and Alberta Premier Danielle Smith suggested earlier this year that Canada should be entering into bilateral trade deals with the U.S. and Mexico, ending the trilateral approach.

“Some of the premiers were getting a bit out of their lanes there in terms of anticipating certain things, and that did not go down well in Mexico,” said Independent Senator Peter Boehm (Ontario), a former career diplomat who serves as co-chair of the Canada-Mexico Friendship Group.

Boehm said that talk has since stopped, and the two countries are moving away from the discord.

Mexico previously lashed out against Canadian criticism of past Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s judicial reforms—as well as in response to similar critiques from the U.S.—and instituted a pause in dealings with the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City last year.

In February, a senior government official noted that the Mexican government was in contact with the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City, ostensibly indicating that the pause had at that point been lifted. At the time, the official remarked that Canada and Mexico weren’t in co-ordination in their response to Trump’s tariff threats.

In a Sept. 19 statement, Conservative MP Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, Ont.), his party’s international trade critic, said that Carney received “nothing of any substance” from his trip to Mexico.

“Mark Carney’s visit to Mexico is his tenth international trip, but



Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, left, and Prime Minister Mark Carney announced a new ‘comprehensive strategic partnership’ at their meeting in Mexico City. Photograph courtesy of X



Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand, left, and Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne travelled to Mexico in early August. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



Independent Senator Peter Boehm says Carney’s trip was a good opportunity to compare notes with Mexico on dealing with Trump. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

instead of securing investment or new markets for our goods, he signed a ‘strategic partnership’ that fails to provide any actual commitments on investment, trade, or economic development,” reads the statement.

Clark, who served as Canada’s top diplomat in Mexico from 2019 to 2024, said Carney’s visit came at the right time.

“It’s high time that a Canadian prime minister made a gesture of this sort,” he said. “My understanding is that it was appreciated by the Mexicans.”

Carney’s visit to Mexico came three months after Sheinbaum travelled to Canada as an invited guest to the G7 Leaders’ Summit in June.

Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand (Oakville East, Ont.) and Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) were in Mexico in early August.

A challenge for Canada with the new bilateral partnership will be the question of the U.S.’s reaction as the third of Three Amigos.

Before Carney’s trip, a senior Canadian government official

told reporters that the government is not working with Mexico to “gang up” on the U.S.

Canada’s increased engagement with Mexico is happening as it is also preparing for the mandated six-year review of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA).

Ottawa opened public consultations on the pact on Sept. 20, which will run through to Nov. 3.

‘Modest’ expectations needed for strategic partnership: former envoy

Clark said expectations should be “modest” for what the comprehensive strategic partnership will look like.

“We’ve been down this road before and our good intentions on both sides have sort of fizzled out because—over the recent past, I’d say—the relationship has been characterized by mutual benign indifference,” he said.

He said it would be a positive if the partnership is about more frequent and more structured meetings between the two countries.

Clark said deepening engagement with Mexico requires political will to overcome a lack of understanding of the other.

“In some ways, it’s difficult to get beyond certain clichéd perspectives of what the other country is about—and we have to fight that,” he said. “Mexico is the 15th largest economy—it’s not just beaches and tequila—it’s a very significant industrial player, [and] a very significant agricultural player.”

Boehm said the partnership can encourage more investment and trade, but also “softer” connections between the two countries, such as parliamentary links.

Boehm is travelling to Mexico in October to take part in a legislator forum.

“More of those sorts of contacts are good, as are soft power links between universities, tech, and innovation,” he said.

Carlo Dade, the University of Calgary’s School of Public Policy director of international policy, said the partnership gives the two countries the ability to move beyond a transactional relationship.

He said the partnership can give the relationship a longer-term focus with a more ingrained, co-ordinating attachment.

“It moves Canada and Mexico beyond the traditional, narrow transactional framing of free trade agreements or narrowly

focused, unconnected single-sector and thematic deals,” he wrote in a recent op-ed in *Policy Magazine*. “Each word—partnership, strategic, comprehensive—adds weight. Together, they signal ambition.”

Washington’s fingerprint on Canada-Mexico ties

Boehm said the recent trip allowed Carney and Sheinbaum to compare notes about how each country is dealing with the U.S.

Canada was unable to meet an Aug. 1 deadline to reach a trade deal with the U.S., which led to Trump increasing the tariff rate on Canada to 35 per cent. Mexico was granted a 90-day reprieve from the increase as it, too, didn’t reach a deal with the Trump White House. CUSMA-compliant goods remain exempt from those tariffs.

“We have some differing interests with the Americans. We have some common interests. Let’s see how we move forward and try to avoid surprises,” Boehm said.

He said he expects “much more” business and parliamentary contacts between Canada and Mexico as the two countries head towards the CUSMA review.

Dade said that Canada and Mexico want to act in lockstep when dealing with the Americans during the CUSMA review.

“You absolutely want to do that. You also absolutely don’t want to talk about doing it,” he said.

Dade said there’s a balance to be struck between managing the Mexican relationship and worrying about a Trump response, and that he has the “utmost empathy and sympathy” for those trying to strike that balance at Global Affairs Canada.

“I don’t know how you balance those two. I can state the problem, but the solution and the diplomacy to pull this off—good luck. It’s going to be tough,” he said. “I don’t know if you can get this right, or [if] there is a ‘right.’ There’s certain ways to get it very wrong.”

Clark said that it is important for Canada not to give the U.S. the impression that it is being ganged up on, citing the “over sensitivity” the Americans are displaying with the recent comments from U.S. Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra on Canadians’ anti-American feelings.

“If that doesn’t show a great deal of over sensitivity to what I think is perfectly reasonable criticism on the part of Canadians, I don’t know what does,” Clark said. “That speaks to susceptibility in Washington to a possible alignment between Mexico and Canada.”

He said that guarding against a U.S. reaction can hinder the development of stronger Canada-Mexico ties.

“We end up having only eyes for Washington,” he said. “We have to fight that.”

Clark said the question that Canada needs to ask itself is what aspects Canada and Mexico can advance without the U.S. being at the table.

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The Hill Times

NEWS

Canada remains at the ‘wrong end of the data vacuum,’ says Sen. Colin Deacon as Liberals preview AI, privacy legislation reboot

Civil liberties groups are urging the need for greater penalties for corporate non-compliance, and for recognition of the human right to privacy in new legislation.

Continued from page 1

The Liberals’ most recent attempt, Bill C-27, which was first introduced in 2022, aimed to repeal parts of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), and to establish the Consumer Privacy Protection Act (CPPA) alongside the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act (AIDA). The Liberals’ first attempt to amend PIPEDA came in 2020 through Bill C-11, the Digital Charter Implementation Act, which died on the Order Paper following Parliament’s dissolution ahead of the 2021 election.

Speaking with reporters, Solomon clarified that the reintroduced bill would not be a complete revival of Bill C-27, “but part of it,” particularly the first two parts of the previously proposed legislation concerning privacy and data protections. He said the hope is to table something addressing both aspects by “late fall.”

But regarding legislation dealing with AI—including as part 3 of Bill C-27—Solomon did not



Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation Minister Evan Solomon, pictured on June 10, told reporters last week that his government plans to resurrect, in part, the last government’s failed attempt to update Canada’s privacy regime, establish a Consumer Privacy Protection Act, and regulate AI some time later this fall. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Senator Colin Deacon says Bill C-27 failed to pass due to the government’s ‘political indifference’ toward the issue, and a year of ‘bickering and gamesmanship’ at the House Industry Committee. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

provide a clear timeline for its arrival, nor whether it would be included in a separate bill. He noted, though, plans to roll out AI policies “specifically around ... the adoption side,” as well as “on

the sovereign cloud and sovereign data side.” Deacon (Nova Scotia), who sponsored both of the previous two bills in the Senate, told *The Hill Times* that despite the lack

of a concrete timeline, he hopes that once the signalled legislation is introduced, all parties will work with urgency to pass the bill. He also said he hopes that the current government has rid itself of the “political indifference” toward the issue that thwarted previous committee studies.

“I was carefully following what was happening with C-27 in the House for the year and a half it was waiting to get to committee,” Deacon said. “It was incredibly frustrating.”

Bill C-27 arrived at the House Industry and Technology Committee for study in September 2023, but Deacon said that despite agreement amongst witnesses and experts on the needed fixes and amendments to the legislation, the following year of meetings examining the bill descended

into unproductive “bickering and gamesmanship.”

“I don’t know if AIDA would have made it through because that was the most challenging part, but if there had been any political willingness and less bickering there’s no question PIPEDA would have been successful,” Deacon explained. “There were solutions on the table that made sense, but they just ignored them entirely last fall.”

Despite meeting 40 times between September 2023 and May 2024, the committee only sat for three meetings in September 2024, and scheduled no further meetings to study the legislation before Parliament was prorogued last March.

Deacon said that the lack of prioritization for the bill during the last Parliament and the government’s decision to withhold its own written amendments until after the House committee completed witness testimony clearly demonstrated the government’s lack of urgency.

At the outset of the House study in September 2023, now-Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.), who at the time was minister of innovation, science, and industry, appeared to provide a verbal summary of the suggested amendments, but said written details would not be provided until after the legislation reached the clause-by-clause review stage at the committee.

Champagne told the committee those amendments would have included the recognition of privacy as a fundamental right; the obligation to protect children’s personal data online; would strengthen and clarify the role of the proposed artificial intelligence and data commissioner, as well as enable it to share information and co-operate with the federal privacy commissioner and the Competition Bureau; and define specific obligations for “high-impact” generative systems, as well as general purpose ones like ChatGPT.

In response, civil liberties advocates described the appearance as a “mixed bag” as the proposed amendments were

Continued on page 29

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NEWS

Disability advocates launch ‘Canada Disability Benefit diet’ to highlight ‘impossible choices’ recipients face

NDP MP Leah Gazan says the federal government is ignoring concerns over its ‘totally inadequate’ disability benefit.

Continued from page 1

extensive consultations before the benefit was implemented and advocacy since, the Liberals have so far remained unresponsive.

“The Liberals continue to put up huge barriers to accessing the benefit,” Gazan said, adding that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal Emergency Response Benefit amounted to 10 times more than what is being allocated to Canadians with disabilities.

Furthermore, beyond the inadequate benefit, Gazan said that acquiring the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) to qualify for the federal benefit is “notoriously difficult” for many seeking to claim it.

Under the current regulations, the CDB requires applicants to first apply for the federal DTC, which advocates have called excessively restrictive as it only benefits those who already pay taxes.

A 2023 report by the Canada Revenue Agency’s Disability Advisory Committee revealed that only a quarter of individuals with severe disabilities surveyed by Statistics Canada in 2017 applied for a DTC certificate, and only 11 per cent of those completed the entire application process and received the credit.

To apply for the tax credit, a person must submit two forms: one that they fill out themselves, and one completed by their doctor. There is no legal maximum on what a Canadian doctor can charge to fill out a form, and patients are typically paying anywhere from \$30 to \$300 to request a form that is not guaranteed to be approved by the CRA.

Additionally, for those who do receive the CDB, the benefit is classified as social assistance under the Income Tax Act and included in net income for tax purposes. While not taxable itself, the CDB increases an individual or family’s total income, resulting in a decrease in other income-tested benefits, such as the Canada Child Benefit, Canada



Jobs and Families Minister Patty Hajdu’s office told *The Hill Times* the government is determined to ‘get this right,’ and is committed to making the Canada Disability Benefit’s eligibility and accessibility ‘as barrier-free and straightforward as possible.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Workers Benefit, and the Goods and Services Tax Credit, among other provincial and federal benefits.

According to the government’s own analysis, only 640,000 of the roughly 1.6-million Canadians living with disabilities will qualify for the benefit, with just 25,000 of those expected to be lifted above the poverty line by 2034-35.

To highlight the inadequacy of the benefit, last week, the Daily Bread Food Bank teamed up with Canadian social media influencers for a “tongue in cheek” social media campaign promoting a new “CDB diet,” challenging people to live off just \$6.67 per day in food by practicing “mindful eating, built-in control portion, and financial discipline.”

The national campaign, spearheaded by the food bank and a coalition of more than 50 anti-poverty and disability rights organizations, is intended to spark outrage and highlight the “impossible choices” faced by Canadians living with disabilities every day, explained Daily Bread CEO Neil Hetherington.

“Many Canadians have no idea that Canadians with disabilities are receiving \$1,000 less than even the poverty line, and have to get by using friends, family, and charity,” Hetherington explained. “We believe that’s fundamentally wrong and that there is something everyday Canadians can do about it.”

Hope Agbolosoo, a fitness influencer and former *Big Brother Canada* contestant, told *The Hill Times* he attempted the diet for an entire week, and documented his trips to the grocery store to



NDP MP Leah Gazan says the Liberal government has not listened to disability advocates’ concerns over the Canada Disability Benefit’s ‘totally inadequate’ payout, and has yet to remove the various barriers to access. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

demonstrate how difficult it is to stretch \$200 for a whole month.

“It doesn’t cover anything,” Agbolosoo said, adding that he ate slices of bread “like crazy” during the week as it was the only snack he could afford.

Beyond the added difficulty with hitting his regular workout routine, Agbolosoo said he couldn’t imagine sustaining himself for a month, much less how someone could work even a part-time shift on so little food.

“I had no energy, and I don’t know how anybody expects anyone to be able to survive on little to nothing,” Agbolosoo said. “Even with a job, most of the people receiving this benefit are still in poverty ... I can’t imagine coming back from work and still having to worry about whether you can still afford to eat.”

Hetherington said that, despite the benefit, the number of Canadians with disabilities accessing food banks has remained static since before the pandemic, with one-in-four clients living with a

disability, and 29 per cent of those reporting social assistance as their primary source of income.

Hetherington said the current structure of the federal and provincial benefits functionally legislates Canadians with disabilities into poverty.

Hetherington said that while he praises the federal government for introducing the benefit, alongside the opposition parties who voted unanimously in favour, he noted that it has fallen far short of its intended aim of lifting Canadians with disabilities out of poverty.

Bill C-22, which established the benefit, received royal assent on June 22, 2023, and received unanimous support from all parties at third reading in the House.

Hetherington said he hopes to convince the federal government to improve the program in the upcoming budget—or at the very least, safeguard it from being reduced—by framing it as both a social and economic boon in upcoming lobbying efforts.

“I don’t know if it will be an austerity budget, but if it is shifted from operations to capital spending that can still have real benefits for the disability community,” Hetherington said, pointing to federal housing measures focused on purpose-built social housing.

However, while “bricks and mortar” to keep a roof over their heads will help in the long term, “Canadians with disabilities need food in their stomachs now,” Hetherington said.

“The conversation around food insecurity is already happening, and we’re hopeful that the policy changes needed to reduce lineups at food banks are already known,” Hetherington explained.

Alongside increasing the benefit to be more aligned with the poverty line—which is closer to \$2,300 a month for a single person in a small city—Hetherington said Daily Bread is calling for the removal of the DTC requirement, and for any individual receiving a provincial or territorial disability benefit to qualify; to exempt the benefit from being treated as income to prevent clawbacks; and to raise the income threshold for eligibility above the poverty line, based on individual income rather than household income.

Hetherington said his group has applied to meet with the Finance Committee as soon as it begins pre-budget consultations, adding that he is hopeful that both Liberal and Conservative members of the committee will be receptive given the attention the latter gave the issue in the first week of the new Parliament.

“We’re hoping to guide both sides of the aisle back from the brink that we collectively are on as a nation,” Hetherington said.

Conservative MP Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray–Cold Lake, Alta.), her party’s social development and families critic, did not respond to *The Hill Times*’ request for comment by publication deadline.

The House Standing Committee on Finance has yet to announce when its pre-budget consultations will begin this fall. It has held two meetings since the House returned on Sept. 15, both of which were focused on committee business.

Last week, Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice–Champlain, Que.) announced that he would table the 2025 federal budget on Nov. 4.

In response to *The Hill Times*’ request for comment, Jobs and Families Minister Patty Hajdu’s (Thunder Bay–Superior North, Ont.) office highlighted the benefits of the initial \$6.1-billion investment, and said the total yearly benefit of \$2,400 is meant to “supplement existing benefits,” and will be adjusted to inflation each year.

“Over time and through feedback, the Government of Canada will improve the CDB and how to access it where needed. We will get this right,” wrote Jennifer Kozelj, Hajdu’s press secretary. “Canada is committed to making the eligibility and application process for the CDB as barrier-free and straightforward as possible.

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UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE RESEARCH

U.S. war on science offers setbacks, opportunity for Canada

p. 16

Research is a major Canadian project

p. 20

Rebuilding our immigration system to attract the best and brightest

p. 21

AI and quantum key to our next era of nation-building

p. 22

Becoming a leader in open science, research, and innovation

p. 23

The unsung guardians of Canadian dominion

p. 24



UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE RESEARCH Policy Briefing

U.S. war on science has ‘damaged’ Canada’s research ecosystem, but also offers opportunity, say university advocates

The gutting of science funding in the U.S. hurts research everywhere, including in Canada, says Gabriel Miller, president and CEO of Universities Canada.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Canada has an opportunity to pick up the slack in North America’s research ecosystem in the wake of sharp drops in support for sciences in the United States, but doing so will require protecting funding measures and streamlining a “broken” international student system, according to university advocates.

“The Americans are a scientific superpower, so to see their science funding gutted means you’re going to hurt research everywhere, and it’s been damaging to research in Canada, as well. Having said that, it’s not the most important problem facing Canadian scientists,” said Gabriel Miller, president and CEO of Universities Canada. “The [Canadian] government has outlined an economic agenda that hinges on the country’s ability to produce new ideas and very talented people, but right now there’s no strategy on the table to do that.”

Recent cuts to science and research in the U.S. under the administration of President Donald Trump have also been terrible for Canada and the rest of the world due to losses in cross-border collaboration opportunities or for funding from American agencies, according to Miller.

In April 2025, preliminary budget documents obtained by *The Washington Post* indicated the Trump administration’s intent to reduce funding for a variety of science agencies for the fiscal year starting on Oct. 1, 2025. This includes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with a proposed 44-per-cent budget cut, or a reduction in funding from US\$9.2-billion to US\$5.2-billion; and the National Institute of Health, with a proposed budget cut of roughly 40 per cent, or a drop from US\$47-billion to US\$27-billion.



In a July 9 press release, Industry Minister Mélanie Joly said Canada’s researchers ‘aren’t just imagining the future—they’re building it,’ with work covering topics such as pandemic readiness and cutting-edge technology. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Gabriel Miller, president and CEO of Universities Canada, says, ‘when a player as big as the United States decides that it’s going to take its toys and go home, that inevitably means that the opportunities for Canadian researchers are going to be more limited.’ *Photograph courtesy of Universities Canada*

Trump’s budget request for fiscal year 2026 also includes major cuts to the National Science Foundation (NSF), from US\$9-billion to US\$4.1-billion, according to *Forbes*.

More than 1,500 NSF grants have been terminated since April 18, according to Grant Witness, a non-profit organization that tracks federally funded

research grants under the Trump administration.

As the war on science unfolds in the U.S., Miller said that Canada’s universities have spent the last five months trying to adapt. About 60 per cent of Canadian researchers publish their work as part of collaborative, international research teams, he said.

“We were getting reports from universities across the country where researchers had just received letters from agencies in the United States saying, ‘due to decisions by the Trump administration we’re no longer able to honour the grant or partnership that we had with your research team.’ That has a financial consequence for different research teams, but it also has a major implication, frankly, for our ability to contribute to scientific progress,” said Miller. “A huge amount of what we do in science and research is done in tandem with researchers in other countries, and when a player as big as the United States decides that it’s going to take its toys and go home, that inevitably means that the opportunities for Canadian researchers are going to be more limited.”

Miller said that the next couple of months—including the yet-to-be-released federal budget expected on Nov. 4—will be “defining” for science and research in Canada. He argued that Canada can take advantage of the U.S. surrendering its position as a global scientific leader, but that involves protecting existing investments in science and research. Miller said that investments in science and research announced in 2024 mustn’t end up on the chopping block in the coming budget.

In Canada’s April 2024 federal budget, significant investments were proposed over five years to support new scientific talent, including \$825-million for enhanced scholarships for master’s and doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows, and an additional \$1.8-billion for federal granting councils to boost core research grants for Canadian researchers.

Also in the vein of improving Canada’s research ecosystem, on July 9, Industry Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic–Cartier, Que.) and Health Minister Marjorie Michel (Papineau, Que.) announced more than \$1.3-billion in funding to support more than 9,700 researchers and research projects across the country. The funding includes \$365.6-million to 4,761 scholarship and fellowship recipients through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

“These researchers aren’t just imagining the future—they’re building it. Their work covers topics such as pandemic readiness and cutting-edge technology, and it reflects the Government of Canada’s commitment to driving innovation, strengthening the economy and tackling the challenges that matter most to Canadians. With this support, we’re empowering the talent that will shape a more resilient, inclusive and globally competitive Canada,” said Joly in a departmental press release.

Another key measure to support science and research in Canada will involve attracting international students. Miller argued that international students

face too long a process in obtaining permits to study in Canada.

“We are hemorrhaging talent right now in Canada, and we’re talking about the very people we’re going to need to make new energy projects happen, reinvent manufacturing, [and] be a leader in artificial intelligence. We’re seeing major drops in the number of graduate students enrolled in computer science. We are losing the people that are going to make the difference between success and failure in the new Canadian economy,” he said. “Canada has always had a tough time being competitive when it came to our visa processing system, but that’s now a critical national liability because much of the talent who were coming here have turned away from Canada because of a sense that the country—in the last couple of years—has decided we don’t want them.”

In 2024, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) placed a cap on the number of study permit applications that could be accepted for processing as a way to help reduce strain on Canada’s housing and health-care systems, among other services. This measure has reduced the number of international students coming to Canada by about 40 per cent, according to the IRCC.

To help international students in coming to Canada, IRCC’s 2025–26 Departmental Plan, released in June, outlined an intention to spend \$427.2-million under the “core responsibility” of facilitating the entry of people wishing to come to Canada temporarily, including international students and temporary workers.

Robert Asselin, CEO of U15 Canada, told *The Hill Times* that cuts to American granting agencies are “important and consequential,” and also provide a lesson for Canada.

“What we’re seeing in the U.S. shows the perils of basically self-inflicting wounds going forward on fundamental research that is so important for our future, including, obviously, on vaccines, on everything that the world is dealing with in terms of world-pressing problems,” he said. “Hopefully there’s a huge lesson for our decision-makers in Canada that this is the wrong way to go, and that, if anything, research should get more support, more funding, because this is how we’re going to drive economic and national security.”

When asked about how Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) is handling science and research in Canada, Asselin, a former Liberal staffer, said Carney’s government hasn’t yet made an pronouncements in that regard, but the upcoming budget will provide an opportunity to send a “signal and vision.”

“I want to see the budget before making comments, but I think, if anything, what’s happening in the U.S. should be a huge warning sign for Canada and the future of research, and—most importantly—the talent that we need to build this country and rebuild the economy in light

Continued on page 18



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UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE RESEARCH Policy Briefing

U.S. war on science has ‘damaged’ Canada’s research ecosystem, but also offers opportunity, say university advocates

Continued from page 16

of the crisis that we’re going through with the U.S.,” he said.

As researchers are potentially driven away from the U.S. due to cuts to science, Canada has an opportunity to draw in that talent, argued Asselin.

“Notwithstanding the investments that were made in the 2024 budget, we’re still far behind,” said Asselin. “When we compare ourselves to the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] ... we’re quite a laggard still.”

In Canada, 14 per cent of people aged 25 to 34 hold a master’s or equivalent degree, which is below the OECD average of 16 per cent, although this represents an increase since 2019 when the share was 11 per cent, according to the OECD.

Canada’s research and development expenditure as a percentage of its gross domestic product

was 1.81 per cent in 2022, placing it below the OECD average of 2.73 per cent for the same year.

Dominique Bérubé, vice-president of research and innovation with McGill University, told *The Hill Times* that American cuts to science and research are damaging the morale among researchers in the U.S.

“What is really changing is the morale, really the morale of the researchers in the United States,” she said, adding that interest among U.S. researchers in relocating to Canada is now more obvious.

However, she argued that even as some U.S. researchers consider moving north of the border, Canada doesn’t have the resources to be an attractive destination, depending on the field of research. As an example, she said that RNA research in Canada doesn’t compare to the U.S.

“McGill has a large scale initiative that has been funded by

the Canadian government around RNA, but even that doesn’t compare to the investment that the United States can make in such science,” she said. “We might see some slowdown in some specific domain. [It] might be an opportunity, [but it] depends if we have the capacity.”

Recent actions taken by universities intended to attract global talent to Canada have included the Polaris platform, which is focused on making Quebec a global hub for research talent. Four Quebec universities—McGill, Université Laval, Université de Montréal, and Université de Sherbrooke—formed Polaris in June, and have put together a series of proposed initiatives to help attract talent to the province, such as for Canada to create new research chairs in strategic sectors such as artificial intelligence, health, and biodiversity; and for Canada to offer targeted scholarships to recruit

talented PhD students and post-doctoral fellows.

“In these uncertain times, we cannot simply wait to be called upon—we must step up. Our universities are ready to lead,” said Bérubé in a McGill press

release announcing the launch of Polaris. “We are putting forward bold, well-structured proposals to support the entire research ecosystem.”

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Canadian universities statistics



Image courtesy of Pixabay

- Universities performed \$17-billion in research and development in 2023, accounting for 35 per cent of total Canadian research and development.
- University research institutes issued more than 272 patents in 2022.
- Universities welcomed approximately 1.16 million full-time, and 421,000 part-time students to campuses in fall 2023.
- There are more than 7,000 climate researchers at Canadian universities, and

more than 70 climate-related research centres and institutes are spread across Canada.

- In 2024, the University of Toronto, University of British Columbia, and McGill University led in scientific publications, with increases in medical, engineering, and computer science research, highlighting a focus on health, technology, and transdisciplinary studies. The University of Toronto maintained its top position with 19,960 publications.

Source: Universities Canada and the Canadian Science Policy Centre

Higher education is under pressure, and we’re up to the challenge

A Canada without our excellent universities would look very different. Now more than ever, we need to come together as a country to strengthen these invaluable institutions.

Jeff Hennessy

Opinion



This is a crisis moment in Canadian higher education. I don’t say that to alarm. I write this as a cautionary tale.

I am very concerned about the public perception of the value of universities in this country.

We are falsely seen by many as bloated, purely public institutions, sitting on hundreds of millions of dollars of discretionary funds, pay-

ing no taxes, selling expensive and useless degrees, and offering little value to our communities and our country. This is a major problem. Somehow, there is a disconnect between what we do and the skilled labour force, the groundbreaking research, and the educated citizenry that help to keep a country like Canada the envy of the world.

We must change this.

I do not blame governments for placing us lower on their priority lists than other publicly supported organizations. Governments must respond to what the public needs and desires, and the value proposition for universities in Canada is lower than ever.

Like so many Canadian universities, Acadia offers excellent programs, brilliant faculty and staff, an ideal community setting, a fantastic research program, and is the major employer in the region. Like so many universities in this country, we have plans for growth.

Yet post-secondary institutions are facing budget pressures due to inflationary pressures, limited increases to provincial grants and student tuition, and the sudden change in federal policy around international student study permits.

Such is the state of the sector right now. Our operating funds

come mainly from student fees and an annual grant from the provincial government, neither of which are increasing at the rate of our expenses. I have no doubt there will be hard decisions in our future.

One such decision we had to make at Acadia earlier this year was to close our swimming pool. Despite millions of dollars in maintenance over almost 60 years, the pool was at the end of its lifecycle, and we could no longer justify the financial impact of operating it.

In terms of pure fiscal analysis, there was no other option. Given all the challenges facing Canadian universities these days, the decision of whether to close a pool might seem less weighty than some other conundrums, but the public response revealed the contempt for universities that pervades in the public mindset. Some saw this for the prudent fiscal decision it was and respected the attention to our primary mission, but many others viewed this as a betrayal and a further example of how universities are not living up to their public promise.

What are some solutions?

We need to listen to students to determine their needs in navigating a complex and hostile



Students walk through the University of Ottawa campus. Post-secondary institutions are facing budget pressures due to inflationary pressures, limited increases to provincial grants and student tuition, and the sudden change in federal policy around international student study permits, writes Jeff Hennessy. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

world. We need to work with governments and our communities to add value to people’s lives. We need to communicate all the wonderful things we are doing. And we need champions: alumni, employers, politicians, prominent leaders, and allies. We need to change the messaging on the value of universities. This is a call for all who care about maintaining a vital and effective higher-education system in Canada: we need your voices.

Is change needed? Of course. Universities are often slow to adapt to the changing needs of our society, but we do evolve. We must accelerate. And, yes, it will involve more hard decisions. Let there be no doubt: we are up to the challenge.

As an example, Acadia just completed an amicable and positive collective bargaining process. We focused on changes that will improve working conditions, streamline processes, enhance equity, and support our people

through fair wages while ensuring financial sustainability. This was a joint achievement in every facet, and both parties brought a strong commitment to building relationships and moving forward.

As institutions, we can engage our campus communities to think differently about revenue and expenditures, and all areas of the university—from faculty to non-academic units—can contribute. We must preserve the excellent foundations of our universities as we innovate to prepare our students for a complex future.

Canadians also need to value their universities for our educational and research mission. A Canada without our excellent universities would look very different. Now more than ever, we need to come together as a country to strengthen these invaluable institutions.

Dr. Jeff Hennessy is president and vice-chancellor of Acadia University.

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UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE RESEARCH Policy Briefing

Research is a major Canadian project

Co-ordinated research and immigration policies can ensure that today's transformative initiatives deliver long-term dividends for Canadians.

Leah Cowen

Opinion

This month marked the announcement of the first group of major national infrastructure projects—initiatives designed to transform the national economy at the speed and scale required to thrive in a changing global economy. University research is at the core of each project.

From supply-chain optimization to critical-minerals processing and low-carbon energy, commercialized university research is a pillar of economic transformation. This research ecosystem may not be part of the visible physical projects it enables, but it ensures that tomorrow's bricks and mortar are built with smarter systems, stronger materials, and cleaner technologies. As we look to a nation-wide effort to create the conditions for Canada's economic success, two policy commitments are key to unleashing the tremendous potential of this country's research ecosystem: sustained research funding, and increased ability to train and attract the people who catalyze discovery and innovation and bring nation-changing projects to fruition.

The benefit of investing in this ecosystem is evident in the first projects announced. Artificial intelligence improves supply-chain management, including at the expanded Port of Montreal. AI can reduce the cost of mineral exploration, and improve safety through measures such as predictive maintenance. New materials can improve battery storage, while AI can predict and compensate for surges in energy demand, improving electrical grid resilience. And as Canada turns renewed attention to the Arctic, technology and community consultation will have to make equal contributions to achieving sovereignty and economic development.

Industry recognizes that researchers and learners generate the ideas and products needed to address emerging challenges. At the University of Toronto (UofT), companies like LG, Siemens, Vale Minerals, and Nissan are among more than 600 industry partners advancing progress across energy, supply chains, mining, and the auto industry. UofT's leadership in AI, regenerative medicine, and quantum computing makes it one of the world's most productive research institutions, contributing breakthroughs that shape entire industries.

Combining AI and life sciences will lead to a new era of health-care breakthroughs. By applying machine learning and AI to Canada's large health datasets, we can grow our global share of clinical trials, drive R&D investment, and improve patient care. Greater data integration can accelerate advances such as the early detection of emergent medical conditions, development of diagnostic tests, and the acceleration



Discovery research and research commercialization provide the foundation for realizing the full economic potential of Canada's infrastructure investments, writes Leah Cowen. *Photograph courtesy of Pixabay*

of drug discovery and development. We have the potential to scale health data infrastructure that will allow us to unlock health data for discovery while maintaining security, privacy, and public trust.

Discovery research and research commercialization provide the foundation for realizing the full economic potential of Canada's infrastructure investments. This focus on innovation now will galvanize the next generation of innovators. It is key to attracting and retaining the talent who foster discoveries that can make Canada a global leader, from semaglutides to neural networks to self-driving labs.

Scholars and innovators fuel the most research-intensive sectors of the economy, and support export competitiveness. Canada can do more to align industrial and talent policies. The time to adapt mechanisms to ease the entry of the best and brightest into the country is now. Other countries are acting decisively. Take, for example, Australia's National Innovation Visa, designed to attract exceptionally talented researchers regardless of age while prioritizing faster processing for those under the age of 55. Or the United Kingdom's Global Talent Visa, which has no upper age limit and recognizes outstanding researchers with academic appointments or national awards.

In Canada, encouraging signs are emerging. This summer, the federal government announced it is considering prioritizing scientists and researchers for permanent residence, placing them alongside technology, engineering, and education workers among other priority occupations. Such a step—paired with faster processing times—would make it easier for Canadian universities and industry to compete globally for talent.

As provinces and the federal government invest billions of dollars in countering tariffs and launch ambitious nation-building projects, co-ordinated research and immigration policies can ensure that today's transformative initiatives deliver long-term dividends for Canadians.

As vice-president of research and innovation, and strategic initiatives, professor Leah Cowen leads the implementation of strategies that advance research and innovation at the University of Toronto, which is home to more than 1,500 venture-backed companies and is the fifth most-cited university in the world.

The Hill Times

A new deal for post-secondary education and research

Finding a solution to the financial crisis our colleges and universities face requires action by both the federal and provincial governments.

David Robinson

Opinion

As post-secondary students across the country head back to class, they face increasing uncertainty. Struggling with years of insufficient core funding and falling international student enrolments, many of our universities and colleges are in trouble.

Enrolment suspensions, program cuts and layoffs have already affected dozens of institutions. Provincial tuition freezes and caps might soon be lifted.

This is weakening our educational and scientific capacity at a time we can ill afford to do so.

South of the border, the Trump administration in the United States has launched, paused, and then re-launched a mutually destructive trade war against Canada and Mexico. It has upended long-established geopolitical alliances, and it is openly attacking the independence and integrity of the scientific community and higher education.

For Canadians, the message is crystal clear: under its current presidency, the U.S. is no longer a reliable economic, diplomatic, or scientific partner. That's why the federal government must step up on all these fronts if we are to build a more resilient Canada.

This must include a new approach to how we fund and support post-secondary education and research.

Finding a solution to the financial crisis our colleges and universities face requires

action by both the federal and provincial governments. Now is not the time for jurisdictional bickering about who is responsible for creating this mess.

What is needed is leadership. The federal government should immediately engage with the provinces to negotiate multilateral funding agreements, as has been done for health care and childcare, to strengthen our universities and colleges, and ensure access, affordability, and high quality.

In tandem, the government should invest in a made-in-Canada research and science policy to counteract the anti-science and anti-education actions of the Trump administration. A lot has been written about what is increasingly looking like an existential threat to higher education and research south of the border. But Trump's actions aren't just confined to the U.S.

Earlier this year, I was contacted by Canadian researchers whose projects are funded wholly or in part by American federal agencies. They had been sent a lengthy questionnaire to confirm that their work does not include a climate or "environmental justice" component, a "gender ideology" component, or diversity, equity, and inclusion elements. The implication is that it doesn't matter if your research is scientifically important; if it doesn't conform to Trump's partisan political ideology, you're not going to be funded.

The Trump presidency poses many dangerous threats both domestically and internationally. But it also provides new opportunities for Canada to

lead. Insulating ourselves from the Trump presidency means not just fighting the effects of tariffs and playing a stronger role on the global stage.

We also need to ensure that Canada is better placed to make up for the vacuum left by the U.S.'s abdication of its role as the world's scientific leader. To achieve this, we urgently need a new deal for post-secondary education and research.

David Robinson is the executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

The Hill Times



Canada-U.S. Trade, Internal Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, and One Canadian Economy Minister Dominic LeBlanc. The federal government should immediately engage with the provinces to negotiate multilateral funding agreements to strengthen our universities and colleges, writes David Robinson. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Policy Briefing **UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE RESEARCH**

Rebuilding our immigration system to attract the best and brightest

The decision last year to include graduate students in the federal study permit cap poses a serious limitation on this country’s capacity to conduct research.

Daniel Jutras

Opinion



In this unprecedented moment when our sovereignty and economic security are under threat, now is the time to deliver an immigration system that can restore Canada’s reputation and welcome the best and brightest talent from around the world. Doing so will be key for the health of our research ecosystem, and a central pillar towards building a strong, self-dependent, and resilient country.

Over the last two years, Canada’s international student system has experienced profoundly disruptive changes. The fallout from these far-reaching reforms continues to be felt. While much of the attention has focused on the impact this is having on temporary resident numbers, post-secondary finances, and this country’s reputation in the world, it also holds troubling repercussions for university research and the longstanding success of our research ecosystem.

That’s because across Canada’s leading research universities, talented graduate students—acting as research assistants, technicians, or support staff—are a foundational part of the success of any research that is conducted at our universities. The decision last year to include graduate students in the federal study permit cap now poses a serious limitation on this country’s capacity to conduct research. The cap on graduate students has effectively become a cap on innovation.

U15 universities did not experience the rapid increases in international student numbers that prompted federal intervention; over the last decade, the share of international students across Canada’s leading research universities has remained relatively static at 20 per cent. However, that has never been the case at the graduate level. By its very nature, the fierce international competition for talent and the mobility of top researchers have made graduate education highly international. Around 40 per cent of all PhD students in Canada are international students.

Our ability to attract and retain the best and brightest minds from around the world has provided a crucial talent pipeline for the country, and underpinned the capacity of the research ecosystem to compete internationally. Canada’s reputation for world-class universities, a welcoming atmosphere, and excellent quality of life has been central to our success in building a vibrant, prosperous, and advanced country. At a time when this competition is fiercer than ever, the signal the graduate cap has sent to prospective students abroad has been significant.

It is being felt across the research ecosystem, especially at U15 univer-

sities where our institutions compete with some of the best in the world for a limited pool of talent. As a result, we are seeing graduate enrolment decline notably—down 4.4 per cent in a single year at U15 universities, and by as much as 20 per cent in some of the most in-demand fields. At Université de Montréal this fall, the drop has been 14 per cent. Without intervention from the new government, we risk long-term damage to our talent pipeline.

Every day on the campuses of Canada’s leading research universities, graduate students are hard at work, supporting research projects, assisting senior researchers and developing their research skills with hands-on experience. These

talented young researchers have the ideas, enthusiasm, and expertise to power innovations and offer the solutions that Canadians need for the future. We must continue to welcome the best and brightest graduate students if we want to build a strong and resilient country.

I see it across the Université de Montréal where graduate students in computer sciences have helped make Montreal a world-leader in artificial intelligence, attracting promising young talent to our university and fostering a thriving start-up ecosystem in the city, all while equipping Canada with the knowledge and understanding it will need to navigate the complexities of this digital transformation safely.

Canada’s new federal government has signalled it shares this vision for a well-managed immigration system, with an emphasis on excellence and modest growth. After all, the prime minister’s recent mandate letter to his cabinet committed to “attracting the best talent in the world to help build our economy.” This is a positive path forward for how we rebuild Canada’s immigration system.

However, to achieve this vision, it is vital that the government reconsider its approach. Now that numbers have been brought under control, it must pursue a more strategic set of policies that does not cap graduate students, promotes excellence, and identifies the high-quality talent we want to attract to Canada. That is the pathway to the managed, quality focused system that Canadians have long supported.

Daniel Jutras is chair of U15 Canada and rector of the Université de Montréal. The Hill Times



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UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE RESEARCH Policy Briefing

Canada's next era of nation-building depends on AI and quantum innovation

The upcoming budget will be critical in charting this country's course in technological growth.

Gabriel Miller

Opinion



Prime Minister Mark Carney's decision to fast-track flagship national projects—from LNG in northern British Columbia, to nuclear power in Ontario—signals a bold push to reshape Canada's economic backbone. But bricks and steel aren't enough. Our prosperity now hinges on mastering the artificial intelligence and quantum revolutions already reshaping every industry, including these very projects.

This work is already underway at Canadian universities. In

labs across the country, students, researchers, and professors are driving breakthroughs in secure quantum communications, advanced materials, and AI applications for health care and infrastructure. They're building the next generation of cybersecurity researchers because today's tools won't stand up to AI and quantum-powered threats. These are innovations with direct relevance to Canada's priorities: safeguarding critical systems, modernizing the grid, and improving patient care.

Universities across the country are leading in these key sectors. At the Université de Sherbrooke, the Institut quantique is advancing internationally recognized research in quantum computing, materials, and communications. The University of Waterloo continues to lead in quantum science and computer engineering, while the University of Toronto's Vector Institute anchors Canada's AI ecosystem.

In B.C., the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Victoria each pursue distinct strengths in quantum computing

and algorithms, and collaborate through Quantum BC to connect their expertise, develop talent, and engage global industry partners.

The Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute, headquartered at the University of Alberta and working with the Universities of Calgary and Lethbridge, is pioneering applications of AI across sectors. In Quebec, Mila—based at Université de Montréal, and uniting researchers from McGill University, Polytechnique Montréal, and HEC Montréal—is one of the world's most influential AI institutes.

In Atlantic Canada, the University of New Brunswick's Quantum Sensing & Ultracold Matter Lab is advancing navigation technologies for environments where GPS fails, with potential defence applications.

Together, these stories show how universities are generating breakthroughs that position Canada to lead in tomorrow's innovations.

However, leadership is not guaranteed. The United States, the European Union, and China are investing in AI and quantum at a scale Canada has yet to match.

In the absence of a Canadian initiative, a competition for U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency funds has identified that three of the 18 companies that have a near-term path to building quantum computers are Canadian, including Photonics, which spun out of Simon Fraser University, and Nord Quantique out of Université de Sherbrooke. They are ensuring stable funding, attracting global talent, and linking innovation directly to economic and security strategies.

The consequences are real if we don't keep up—homegrown talent will move abroad, and our domestic capacity will weaken, leaving Canada reliant on foreign technologies to power our economy and defend our infrastructure. Short-term programs and shifting rules on immigration undermine our reputation and make it harder to compete for the world's best minds.

The upcoming budget will be critical in charting Canada's course in technological growth. As the federal government weighs research cuts in its spending review, nearly all the

investments promised just last year now hang in the balance. Slashing funding would drive researchers away and undercut Canada's efforts to attract top talent and seize the opportunity of the U.S. brain drain. Those goals can't be achieved by pulling support from Canadian researchers.

A commitment to stable research funding would provide universities with the foundation needed to plan ahead and deliver results. At the same time, stronger ties with industry and government would speed the path from campus discovery to national impact. Establishing new Industrial and Quantum Research Chairs could serve as a way to attract talent while creating stronger ties between university and Canadian industry.

As an early mover on quantum, Canada is well positioned to lead on creating new industries and technologies. Let's not squander it.

AI and quantum are the next frontier. Investing in Canada's universities means securing our economy, strengthening defence, and shaping future infrastructure. The expertise is here—all it needs is the commitment to succeed.

Gabriel Miller is the president and CEO of Universities Canada. He is an experienced not-for-profit leader who has built an extensive track record in member relations, advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and public policy development over his 22-year career.

The Hill Times

Trust universities to lead Canada's next wave of innovation

The talent, infrastructure, and ideas are here. What's needed now is federal leadership that matches the scale of our ambitions.

Julie St-Pierre

Opinion



Canada's next global breakthrough might already be growing in a university lab, but will it have the support it needs to thrive?

From AI-driven health diagnostics to climate-resilient agriculture, Canadian universities are not standing by—we are leading the charge. We're driving the next wave of innovation, and

now is the time to spotlight our successes and affirm the role of federal investment in securing Canada's global competitiveness.

Universities are not just educational institutions, they are national assets. They are where ideas are born, tested, and translated into real-world impact. Sustained federal support ensures that these ideas don't stall in the lab, but reach the communities, industries, and systems that need them most.

At the University of Ottawa, we're building the infrastructure and talent base that powers tomorrow's breakthroughs. Through core facilities and cross-disciplinary research clusters, we're tackling today's challenges—housing, homelessness, climate change—while shaping the models that will guide Canada's economy and public policy for decades to come.

This foundation is already attracting top talent—a strength the federal government amplifies through programs like the Canada Excellence Research Chairs and the Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF). These

initiatives build on what universities have created, ensuring Canada continues to punch above its weight in global innovation.

One such CFREF-funded initiative is the Brain-Heart Interconnectome (BHI), a flagship program that unites researchers in neuroscience, cardiology, mental health, and data science to explore the intricate connections between the brain, heart, and mind. With more than 45 academic, government, and industry partners, BHI is already shaping new approaches to diagnostics and care, and exemplifies how federal investment can catalyze bold, cross-sectoral research with real-world health implications.

Another federally funded success is the Canadian Pandemic Preparedness Hub (CP2H), co-led by uOttawa, The Ottawa Hospital, and McMaster University. Supported through the Canada Biomedical Research Fund and the Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund, CP2H is building Canada's capacity in vaccine development, infectious disease research, and biomanufacturing.

It connects universities, hospitals, industry, and government to prepare Canada for future health emergencies, and serves as a blueprint for how academic research can reinforce public health infrastructure.

Complementing these national efforts is the Advanced Medical Research Centre (AMRC), a \$300-million, seven-storey facility currently under construction at uOttawa's Faculty of Medicine. Supported by investments from the Government of Ontario, the AMRC will feature cutting-edge wet labs and house the Ottawa Health Innovation Hub, which supports biotech startups and accelerates the translation of discoveries into therapies and technologies.

The AMRC is more than a building; it is a launchpad for Canada's next generation of health innovation. And it's a regional example of how provincial support can reinforce and amplify federally funded innovation ecosystems. By aligning provincial and federal support, we can ensure breakthroughs made here in Ottawa ripple across Canada and beyond.

These examples prove the model works: when governments back ambitious university-led initiatives, Canada competes—and wins—globally. So, the question isn't whether this approach is effective, but whether we have the vision to scale it—to grow its impact through wider institutional collaboration, and embed it in a long-term national strategy.

Canada doesn't need to imagine this future, we can build it now. The choice is whether to lead or lag. That's why the federal government must champion universities as key partners in shaping Canada's future, not only through funding and policy, but through public messaging that builds trust and secures public buy-in.

Let's invest boldly in the innovation ecosystem that begins at our campuses and extends into every corner of society. The talent, infrastructure, and ideas are here. What's needed now is federal leadership that matches the scale of our ambitions, and a national commitment to trust in the power of universities to lead us forward.

Julie St-Pierre is vice-president of research and innovation at the University of Ottawa where she leads strategic initiatives to foster research excellence, support infrastructure, and strengthen partnerships that benefit society at the local, national and international levels.

The Hill Times

Policy Briefing UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE RESEARCH

More to be done for Canada to become a leader in open science, research, and innovation

The federal government must do more to seed sustainable, community-driven approaches to open science.

Susan Haigh

Opinion

University libraries have long been recognized as essential hubs for study, scholarly resources, and expert guidance, but their role today extends far beyond these traditional functions. Across Canada, academic libraries are driving the creation, sharing, preservation, and application of scientific knowledge through a commitment to open science—a global movement dedicated to making research data, publications, software, and methods freely accessible and reusable.

To support this movement, academic libraries engage in an open and networked research ecosystem, enabling global visibility, use, and impact of Canadian scholarship. With campus partners, libraries support the implementation of government policies such as the Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications and the Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy, and they actively engage in international networks, allowing our community to learn from key developments in other countries.

Co-operative, innovative, and technology-enabled national approaches keep Canadian research strong during difficult times, like now, when funding cuts and policy uncertainties challenge the post-secondary sector. The Canadian Research Knowledge Network, the Scholars Portal at the University of Toronto, and the Research Data Management arm of the Digital Research Alliance of Canada each illustrate how nation-wide collaboration leads to innovation, improved practice, and cost efficiency. While Canadian academic libraries vary in size and serve communities with different research strengths, these cross-cutting infrastructure organizations have proven that pooling our expertise and resources creates capacity and outcomes impossible to attain on an individual institutional basis.

While our joint efforts have seen success, there is more to be done for Canada to become a leader in open science, research, and innovation.

Recently, Canadian stakeholders in the research community have articulated a national strategy for persistent identifiers. Persistent identifiers (PIDs) are long-lasting

digital links to research “entities,” which can be a journal article, a scholar, or an institution. Broad adoption of persistent identifiers—ORCID iDs for researchers, and digital object identifiers for research outputs—is key to ensuring long-term access, streamlining administrative processes, and clarifying research impact for institutions and funders. PIDs enable systems to connect and function as an ecosystem.

Through university and government investment, Canada has been building strength in open journal publishing. A key example is the innovative Coalition Publica, which unites two internationally-recognized Canadian platforms: the Open Journal Systems, developed by the Public Knowledge Project at Simon Fraser University; and Érudit, a publishing platform created by Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and Université du Québec à Montréal. Such non-commercial, open source infrastructure—combined with a vibrant pan-Canadian community of practice and continued government and institutional backing—will allow domestic open access publishing to gain a stronger foothold across all domains, and in both official languages.

Additionally, universities are supporting greater dissemination of research outputs through nation-wide, bilingual repository infrastructure. Three library-led services are driving this forward: the Federated Research Data Repository, a curated, general-purpose repository custom built for large datasets; Borealis, a multidisciplinary, secure Dataverse service used by 75 institutions across the country for preserving and sharing smaller datasets; and Scholaris, a new initiative to provide common infrastructure, technical expertise, and community support for institutional repositories of research publications.

These national strategies and services demonstrate that collective approaches reduce costs to our individual universities, yet build a strong, integrated, and resilient research ecosystem. To achieve their potential at scale, however, requires real and ongoing investment.

The federal government must do more to seed sustainable, community-driven approaches to open science. Many countries, especially in Europe, have developed national open science strategies and established co-ordinating bodies to oversee targeted programs to advance their science policy goals.

Canada, too, must invest in the promotion and co-ordination of open science, and in the sustained provision of national research infrastructure—and research libraries play a strategic role in advancing Canada’s scientific sovereignty.

Susan Haigh is executive director of the Canadian Association of Research Libraries, an association of Canada’s 31 largest research libraries.

The Hill Times

Our immigration system is locking out some top global researchers

We’re losing out on global talent at a time when Canada has a golden opportunity.

Alan Shepard

Opinion

Nearly two years ago, Western University recruited Dr. Robyn Klein as the Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Neurovirology and Neuroimmunology.

She earned her MD and PhD from Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, completed her clinical and postdoctoral training at Harvard, and is one of the world’s top neuroscientists. She is spearheading a research program to understand how infectious diseases affect the brain—a field she essentially created.

Klein moved her career and full research program to Canada from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Mo. Next-level Canadian funding sources like the \$8-million Canada Excellence Research Chairs Program were key selling points in her recruitment. (I’m discussing her case with her permission.)

But sometimes the right and left hands of government are not in sync. Having awarded Klein a CERC, it has now paused her pathway to permanent residency. Why? Her age.

Klein hasn’t been able to fully put down roots because of Canada’s complex permanent residency system, including recent changes for foreign nationals who must wait to receive an invitation to apply.

In 2024, the federal government slashed permanent residency targets by more than 20 per cent, and declared more than 40 per cent of new permanent residents would be drawn from the international labour pool already in the country.

And permanent residency assessment favours younger immigrants—aged 20 to 29—who are seen as better positioned to fuel Canada’s long-term economy.

Researchers are just building their careers in their 20s, and few, if any, would be strong candidates for a CERC at that age—perhaps Albert Einstein excepted. Established researchers are often 40-plus years old, by which time they receive very few points for age in the comprehensive ranking system used to assess permanent residency applications.

After 45, there are no points for age. Apparently not even for the highly specialized experts our economy needs.

Without permanent residency, outstanding researchers like Klein are inhibited from fully committing to Canada in ways both intangible and tangible—buying a home is out of reach due to augmented taxes up to 25 per cent for non-residents,



Immigration Minister Lena Metlege Diab. A nimble immigration process that prioritizes much-needed expertise will signal to the world that Canada welcomes top talent, writes Alan Shepard. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

for example. Renewing work permits is tedious and time-consuming, and can prevent participation in international professional activities because of the long processing times.

Just being on a work permit, without a sense of permanency, produces uncertainty. And all of this is very stressful—the opposite of the welcome we need to send to attract senior talent from around the world.

Multiply that situation for hundreds of researchers across the country, and we’ve got a serious problem.

We’re losing out on global talent at a time when Canada has a golden opportunity.

After drastic cuts to American funding agencies and perceived government interference in university operations in the United States, top academics—both in the U.S., and worldwide—are looking elsewhere.

For many, Canada is a preferred destination.

The federal government wants to align our immigration levels with current social and physical infrastructure. That makes good sense.

But we must offer more than a lottery system for senior scientists, engineers, physicians, and other top researchers.

We need to make it more straightforward and less uncertain to recruit global research leaders—those who will help drive our efforts to innovate across so many fields.

A nimble immigration process that prioritizes much-needed expertise will signal to the world that Canada welcomes top talent. Lifting the cap on international graduate students would also be a winning idea.

Otherwise, we’re spinning our wheels when the stakes for Canada’s future couldn’t be higher.

Alan Shepard is the president of Western University. He immigrated to Canada from Texas in 2002, and is a proud Canadian citizen.

The Hill Times

UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE RESEARCH Policy Briefing



A building on the University of Ottawa campus. Continuous financial support in university and college research is vital, write Dr. Thomas Pulinilkunnil, Ecaterina Cozma, and Dr. Walid A. Houry. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The unsung guardians of Canadian dominion, innovation, and prosperity

To fully leverage the capabilities of academic institutions, Canada must adopt a future-oriented research approach by aligning research priorities with national interests.

Thomas Pulinilkunnil,
Ecaterina Cozma &
Walid A. Houry



Opinion

Canadian universities and colleges influence national priorities; however, their contributions are frequently undervalued.

These institutions serve as hubs for research, innovation, job creation, talent cultivation, and social transformation, thereby fulfilling their educational missions. The effective execution of their research mandates fortifies Cana-

da's strength, independence, and progressiveness. With \$17-billion invested in R&D in 2023, Canadian universities accounted for 35 per cent of the national total.

Research-intensive academic institutions—beyond university campuses—are discovering breakthroughs to tackle real-world issues, progressing in life sciences, health care, quantum computing, net-zero energy, and artificial intelligence. Research conducted in universities and colleges also plays a crucial role in the non-profit sector by tackling critical health and social challenges, thereby improving the quality of life for Canadians and strengthening the nation's social cohesion. As of 2022, Canadian universities and research institutions had supported 875 startups and filed 272 patents.

With the complex global issues that the country faces, improving research capabilities at Canadian universities and colleges is necessary. Research strides will bolster our self-sufficiency and help effectively confront future problems, including natural resource disputes, climate change, and trade barriers.

Nonetheless, academic institutions continue to face persistent challenges in undertaking and sustaining research, including

federal restrictions on international students, domestic tuition caps, and sluggish tri-council grant funding increases. The current financial crisis has compelled universities and colleges across the country to implement hiring freezes, decrease staff, downsize research, discontinue student services, limit programs in essential sectors, and, in certain instances, close campuses. Funding research at the university and college levels is a foundational element that drives academic innovation, enabling institutions to conduct impactful research, develop infrastructure, advance the economy, and foster collaboration for the benefit of society.

However, innovation does not occur in isolation; it originates from people. Continuous financial support in university and college research is vital, not just for the advancement of research initiatives and infrastructure, but also for nurturing and developing talent.

Today's trainee researchers are tomorrow's leaders, safeguarding the Canadian research ecosystem. Universities and colleges prepare the next wave of intellectuals, innovators, and future leaders. Continued funding of university and college research guarantees a strong pipeline of

highly qualified personnel with hands-on research opportunities, fostering innovation and equipping students with the competencies necessary to compete and collaborate in a rapidly evolving international job market, thereby driving economic growth.

Without adequate research funding for trainees and early-career researchers, Canada risks diminishing its global leadership in research. Indeed, students, faculty, and academic institutions are demanding that provincial and federal governments invest in post-secondary education and research aggressively by committing to continually increasing research funding for the core budgets of the federal research granting councils.

To fully leverage the capabilities of academic institutions, Canada must adopt a future-oriented research approach by aligning research priorities with national interests. This involves harnessing the entire range of scholarly expertise to secure this country's autonomy and foster its role as a global leader in advancing groundbreaking innovations across various fields, including biology, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and climate change.

In a landscape where knowledge equates to power, the research output from Canada's higher education institutions represents an essential asset and a rich resource.

Academic research institutions are not merely centres of learning, but are launchpads for ideas, solutions, innovation, and progress. The national growth and economy are strengthened by impactful research conducted by universities and colleges; hence, they are a critical stakeholder that deserves a spot at the table discussing the Canadian research ecosystem.

By strategizing sustainable investments in research, universities and colleges can lead innovation, augmenting Canada's standing in global research and development, and fostering inclusive prosperity.

Dr. Thomas Pulinilkunnil is a professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Dalhousie University. He presently serves as a member at large on the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences' Advocacy and Government Relations Committee.

Ecaterina (Cathy) Cozma is a graduate student at the BC Cancer Research Centre, University of British Columbia. She currently holds the position of trainee member at large on the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences' Advocacy and Government Relations Committee.

Dr. Walid A. Houry is a professor in the Department of Biochemistry and the Department of Chemistry at the University of Toronto. He currently holds the position of president of the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences.

The Hill Times

OPINION

We must not allow China to divide and conquer us on EVs

Ottawa must step up and work with western provinces to reassure farmers, diversify agricultural markets, and ensure canola is not weaponized against us.

Henry Chan

Opinion



I write this as a cautionary warning: Canada may be walking straight into a trap China has carefully set.

As a lifelong Saskatchewanian, I understand the frustration

many farmers and westerners feel about Ottawa's perceived bias toward Central and Eastern Canada. That discontent is real. But Saskatchewan and Alberta's call for Ottawa to drop the 100-per-cent tariff on Chinese electric vehicles (EVs) is far more complex than a simple East-versus-West narrative. Framing it as Ottawa protecting autoworkers while punishing farmers misses the deeper reality: this issue sits at the intersection of foreign policy, trade strategy, and national security.

Consider China's recent 75.8-per-cent tariff on Canadian canola seeds. This comes at a delicate moment in our trade relationship with the United States. Beijing's choice of commodity was no accident—it targeted the livelihood of Prairie farmers, knowing full well that Ottawa's political base differs sharply from that of Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe and Alberta Premier Danielle Smith. By using canola and EVs as bargaining chips, China creates the perfect condi-

tions for driving a wedge between Ottawa and the western provinces, tapping into long-standing grievances over carbon taxes, natural resource management, and transfer payments.

But Canadians and their leaders must not allow themselves to be pawns in China's power game.

Whether or not the original EV tariffs were politically motivated, Canada cannot yield to Beijing's demands. Protecting North America's auto industry was only part of the rationale. The deeper concern is national security. Chinese EVs have been described as "spy machines on wheels" due to their potential to capture audio, video, location, and biometric data—and transmit it back to Beijing. Under Chinese security laws, companies can be compelled to assist intelligence services. These are not paranoid fears; they echo warnings from congressional reports in the U.S.

Canada has already banned Huawei from its 5G networks on similar grounds. Why would Chinese EVs be any different?

As a westerner, I share the resentment toward Ottawa's biased approach of politics that often favours Central and Eastern Canada. But on this issue, national security must rise above regional frustrations. China will never be Canada's friend. That reality was on display when Chinese President Xi Jinping stood shoulder to shoulder with Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un. On this front, both Liberals and Conservatives in Ottawa recognize the stakes: Chinese EVs must not be allowed to undermine our security.

Prime Minister Mark Carney and premiers Moe and Smith must resist Beijing's divide-and-conquer strategy. Canada cannot lift EV tariffs in exchange for China dropping its canola duties. That would be a dangerous precedent of economic blackmail.

Instead, Ottawa must step up and work with western provinces to reassure farmers, diversify agricultural markets, and

ensure canola is not weaponized against us.

China is a complex political actor. The Chinese Communist Party thrives on political struggle and has long relied on divide-and-conquer tactics. Canadian leaders must not reduce our options to "no U.S., therefore China." We can trade with China when it makes sense, but only with caution, clear-eyed strategy, and recognition of the fundamental differences in values and principles. Without a tactically co-ordinated plan and counter-manoeuvres, Moe's glittering and rushed trip to China has shown to have little success; it was simply a subsidized photo-op ego trip.

To succeed, Canada needs skilled negotiators who understand China's political culture and long game. Entering talks without preparation—blind, divided, and desperate—is like stepping into a jungle naked and hoping not to be eaten by a tiger.

Quiet, co-ordinated diplomacy is our best shot. Canada must not look desperate. Above all, we must stand united as a country.

Henry Chan is a former co-director of Saskatchewan Stands with Hong Kong. He has been invited multiple times to give expert testimony before Parliament concerning issues related to Hong Kong and Canada-China relations.

The Hill Times

Canada must treat hydrogen as a strategic asset

As the government embarks on its first nation-building projects and prepares its inaugural budget, we face a pivotal moment—and hydrogen must be part of the plan.

Beth Buckmaster & David Billedeau

Opinion



Canada's story has always been shaped by nation-building projects: railways that stitched provinces together, electricity

grids that powered growth, oil and natural gas pipelines that carried our resources to market, and telecommunications networks that connected people. Hydrogen has significant potential to add to that story.

Hydrogen is a versatile, zero-emission fuel that can power vehicles, generate electricity, heat homes, and decarbonize heavy industry. It can also serve as long- and short-term energy storage, helping stabilize grids. Federal modelling shows that scaling a clean hydrogen economy could generate up to \$50-billion in annual revenue by 2050, and support more than 350,000 good jobs across the value chain. In other words, hydrogen is not a niche solution; it is a transformational economic and environmental opportunity.

This opportunity spans every region—from British Columbia's production hubs and Pacific access, to Prairie-based innovation, Ontario's manufacturing

base, Quebec's clean power, and Atlantic export terminals. Indigenous, rural, and industrial communities all have a stake in its success. With global markets accelerating, Canada must act with scale, speed, and ambition or risk losing a once-in-a-generation opportunity.

As the Carney government embarks on its first nation-building projects and prepares its inaugural budget, the country faces a pivotal moment—one where hydrogen must be part of the plan. The United States is retreating on clean energy while continuing to pressure Canada with tariffs. Meanwhile, Canada is aiming to accelerate its own transition and diversify export markets. In this context, hydrogen offers a unique advantage: it can boost competitiveness, unlock new trade opportunities, and position this country as a global leader in clean energy.

The Canadian Hydrogen Association has set out five priorities

to ensure hydrogen is recognized not just as an environmental tool, but as a pillar of Canada's economic and industrial strategies.

First, hydrogen must be fully integrated into our economic, industrial, and export strategies. It should be embedded in infrastructure, innovation, critical minerals, defence, workforce, and trade agendas. Integration must be deliberate and co-ordinated: hydrogen cannot be siloed as an "energy file" alone. Linking clean fuels to industrial decarbonization, trade competitiveness, and energy security would firmly position hydrogen within Canada's vision for growth.

Second, Canada must strengthen its investment tools. The Clean Hydrogen Investment Tax Credit is vital, but it requires reform to remove regional inequities, broaden eligibility to include derivative fuels such as ammonia and methanol, and support the full value chain from production to distribution. Ensuring fair access across provinces and technologies will unlock the scale of investment needed to compete globally.

Third, the government must drive deployment at scale. Meeting existing hydrogen demand with low-carbon supply—and opening new markets in transport, marine, and heavy industry—will require bridging the cost gap between grey and clean hydrogen, streamlining approvals, and funding hub-scale projects that are investment-ready.

Fourth, Canada must build the infrastructure backbone. Refueling corridors, storage terminals, marine bunkering facilities, and

power applications are essential to connect production hubs to end-users and export markets. Without enabling infrastructure, Canada cannot fully capitalize on its production advantages or establish itself as a reliable global supplier.

Finally, investors and communities require long-term certainty. Stable carbon pricing, strong clean fuel regulations, and robust "Buy Canadian" incentives will give industry the confidence to invest billions of dollars, while ensuring taxpayer-supported projects strengthen this country's manufacturing and supply chains. With predictable policy signals, Canada can secure durable economic growth while delivering on climate and energy security goals.

Across the country, members of the Canadian Hydrogen Association are proving hydrogen's potential to cut emissions, enhance energy security, create jobs, and boost competitiveness. Industry continues to invest and innovate; however, success depends on the federal government treating hydrogen as a true strategic asset. Hydrogen can drive our clean energy transition while creating prosperity nationwide. The opportunity is here, but only if we act with the ambition the future demands.

Beth Buckmaster is vice-president of strategic client relations at Solestiss, and chair of the board of the Canadian Hydrogen Association. David Billedeau is president and chief executive officer of the Canadian Hydrogen Association.

The Hill Times

OPINION

Has the time come for a Canadian DARPA?

A program inspired by DARPA would position our country as an indispensable partner within NATO and a credible contributor to North American security.

Arvind Gupta
& Eric Bosco

Opinion

“Canada is at a historic crossroads,” Finance and National Revenue Minister François-Philippe Champagne said recently. Never before have we had such a clear opportunity to make a defining choice as a nation to invest in our technological sovereignty and strengthen national security, while mobilizing our talent, researchers, and scientists to build a more resilient future.

With massive investments in defence and strategic infrastructure—\$128-billion over five years, including \$83-billion dedicated exclusively to National Defence, much of it earmarked for modernizing our military equipment and infrastructure—Canada now has the financial means to turn innovation capacity into a tangible asset for our security and autonomy. Beyond the numbers, this is a chance to build a long-term strategy for technological leadership, one that integrates academic research, private sector innovation, and defence priorities into a coherent, goal-driven national program.

A Canadian program inspired by the United States’ Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) could transform these investments into strategic innovation. In the U.S., DARPA revolutionized technological development: top-tier research teams, autonomy in project management, and, above all, a guaranteed client—the U.S. military. Every successful innovation is immediately applied, with a direct impact on national security and the country’s technological leadership.

What makes this model so effective and so relevant for Canada is its long-term vision. DARPA projects often span decades—sometimes as many as 30 years—allowing researchers to focus on fundamental R&D with clear objectives, rather than chasing short-term wins. Its structured stages with companies ensure steady progress, while a competitive environment drives creativity and broad applicability. This deliberate approach has repeatedly produced transformative breakthroughs, from the internet to stealth technology. Adopting a similar framework in Canada would not only strengthen defence innovation, but also create fertile ground for civilian applications, ensuring every dollar invested benefits both our security and our economy.

Canada has long studied this model, but always without the critical elements: a direct link with the military client, and guaranteed investments to move research into application. Today, with the defence



Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne. With massive investments in defence and strategic infrastructure, Canada now has the financial means to turn innovation capacity into a tangible asset for our security and autonomy, write Dr. Arvind Gupta and Éric Bosco. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

spending already planned, those conditions are finally in place. If we are serious about building a Canadian version of DARPA, the time is now.

These expenditures will also have a major economic impact, stimulating construction and strengthening domestic production through an ambitious defence industrial strategy. By creating a direct bridge between our laboratories, our companies, and our Armed Forces, we will generate a powerful ripple effect: new patents, stronger Canadian value chains, and benefits across the whole economy. Far more than a lever for aerospace and advanced technologies, such a program would also reinforce Canada’s entire manufacturing sector—the true engine of our regions—by driving local production and large-scale industrial innovation.

A Canadian DARPA would mobilize talent in strategic fields—artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, optronics, quantum technologies, and infrastructure resilience—while keeping these innovations in Canada and reinforcing our autonomy. It would also help retain our best researchers and attract international talent at a time when global competition for innovation has never been fiercer.

As our allies accelerate their own programs—Europe with the European Defence Agency, Australia with AUKUS—Canada cannot afford to fall behind. A program inspired by DARPA would position our country as an indispensable partner within NATO and a credible contributor to North American security.

The opportunity is here: the funding is in place, and the talent is ready. With vision, ambition, and commitment, Canada can seize this moment to shape the next generation of technologies, safeguard our sovereignty, and ensure a prosperous and secure future for all Canadians. Let us show the world what this country can achieve.

Dr. Arvind Gupta is a professor of computer science at the University of Toronto. Éric Bosco is executive director of the AdapT Institute at École de technologie supérieure.

The Hill Times

Administrative hurdles to disability benefits are barriers to survival

All nursing designations must be recognized as health professionals qualified to sign off on the federal Disability Tax Credit.

Rabia Khedr & Gurjit Kaur Toor

Opinion

Applying for disability supports in Canada often feels like running a bureaucratic marathon. For people already struggling with serious health conditions, the process of proving their disability to qualify for the federal Disability Tax Credit can be exhausting and demoralizing. The forms are long, the requirements rigid, and the rules outdated.

Currently, only physicians and nurse practitioners are authorized to certify the full Disability Tax Credit (DTC) application, not recognizing that care for those with disabilities often happens in team-based models with much of the groundwork done by nurses—registered nurses (RNs), registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs), licensed and registered practical nurses (LPNs and RPNs)—and allied health professions, such as social workers and occupational therapists.

This is not just a paperwork issue. It is a matter of access, equity, and dignity for those with disabilities. And it’s about making our health system more efficient for everyone.

Physicians and nurses both describe the administrative burden of the DTC process as overwhelming. Every form takes time away from patients in already overstretched clinics and hospitals. Yet RNs, RPNs, and LPNs who often gather patient histories—assessing and documenting functional limitations, and supporting patients through the system—rarely get recognition for their expertise.

Physicians and nurse practitioners must provide the final signature on the DTC form, even when they may have less ongoing contact with the patient than their other nursing and allied health professional colleagues.

In the 2024 budget, the federal government earmarked \$285-million to compensate physicians for completing DTC forms. On paper, this looks like an effort to address the bureaucratic burden. But in practice, it raises more questions than it answers. Who exactly will be eligible for compensation? How will the money flow? Will nurses and allied health professionals be included?

Ottawa has an opportunity to modernize how we assess disability and relieve the health-care system of wasted time and additional costs.

The national voice for half a million nurses in Canada, the Canadian Nurses Association, recommends the federal

government allow all nursing designations—not just nurse practitioners—to complete and certify the DTC form. This makes sense.

Nurses work in team-based models of care informing diagnostic formulation and treatment plans, and supporting patients with their care goals. All categories of nurses are well-positioned to do outreach and educate patients about the DTC, conduct standardized assessments, and support a more streamlined process—significantly increasing uptake and ensuring more eligible individuals receive support.

This recommendation aligns with the federal government’s own Disability Advisory Committee report to simplify the DTC application process and broaden the range of health professions completing and certifying the form.

Recognizing the expertise of nurses and allied health professions would not only ease pressure on physicians and nurse practitioners, but also speed up access for people with disabilities.

Of course, compensation should follow the work: if nurses and allied health professionals are contributing to these assessments, they should be compensated fairly.

There are also smarter ways to cut red tape entirely. Automatic enrolment for people who already qualify for provincial disability benefits would spare applicants time, money, and stress, while also reducing additional costs to the health-care system.

The DTC application process matters especially now because the Canada Disability Benefit—a new federal income supplement for persons with disabilities—has begun its rollout.

Access to the new benefit is linked to the DTC. That means the flaws in the DTC process—the paperwork bottlenecks, the exclusion of nurses, the lack of automatic enrolment—risk carrying over into this historic new benefit, leaving people behind.

For people with disabilities living in poverty, delays can mean the difference between paying rent and facing eviction, between putting food on the table and going hungry. Administrative hurdles are not just inconveniences; they are barriers to survival.

The federal government should act on three fronts: expand authority to certify the DTC beyond physicians and nurse practitioners to include all nursing designations and certain allied health professions; implement automatic enrolment for people already receiving provincial disability benefits; and ensure fair compensation for all professionals who contribute to the completion and certification process, not just physicians.

These are not radical demands. They are pragmatic and cost-effective solutions that would benefit both health professionals and the people they serve.

As Canada takes historic steps to reduce disability poverty through the new benefit, we cannot allow outdated systems to stand in the way.

Rabia Khedr is the national director of Disability Without Poverty. Gurjit Kaur Toor, RN, MPH, is the director of research and policy at the Canadian Nurses Association.

The Hill Times

‘It’s not right’: interim PBO calls for legislative changes to avoid repeating the circumstances of his hiring

Jason Jacques says he found out he was shortlisted for the six-month interim job just three days before his boss’ term expired on Sept. 2.

BY RIDDHI KACHHELA

Canada’s interim Parliamentary Budget Officer Jason Jacques says legislative changes are needed to prevent the government from repeating the way he was appointed to the watchdog post.

Jacques was notified that he would be offered the role just 72 hours before his predecessor Yves Giroux’s term was due to end on Sept. 2. The temporary appointment was announced on Sept. 2, with a start date of the next day.

In an interview with *The Hill Times*, he said he was “very surprised” to get a phone call from the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) and the Privy Council Office (PCO), and expressed concern over the government leaving the appointment to the very last minute.

Giroux has said publicly that he was left in the dark about the government’s plans for his successor.

“I was very surprised that it was so tight because under legislation, effectively, our office ceases to exist without the Parliamentary Budget Officer,” said Jacques, who was the PBO’s director general of economic and fiscal analysis before taking the interim top job. He has previously worked for the PCO, Finance Canada, and the Bank of Canada.

He called for legislative amendments to ensure that any time there is a gap between two permanent appointments, there is a process to ensure the interim candidate is also approved by the other parties.

“As somebody who’s been on the Hill for 17 years, who really believes in democracy ... I think it’s for the best that I took the job on an interim basis, but it’s not right,” Jacques said.

Under the law, the hiring of a permanent PBO must be approved by Parliament, as the office is a bipartisan entity tasked with providing an unbiased



The prime minister appointed Jason Jacques, pictured, as interim Parliamentary Budget Officer for six months, the maximum length a person can be appointed to lead the independent body without Parliament’s approval. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

analysis of the country’s financial and economic situation. The Parliament of Canada Act does not create an office, but rather the parliamentary budget officer who then has the legal right to hire staff to support them in doing their job, Jacques highlighted.

The PBO post was first created in 2006 by then-prime minister Stephen Harper’s Conservative government, but 2017 amendments to the Parliament of Canada Act made the PBO an independent officer of Parliament.

Jacques said while he was “surprised” he made the cut, he was also “gratified” that posting somebody from within the office meant the government liked the work the PBO has done in the past.

While the PBO is formally appointed by the governor-in-council, it is the PCO and PMO that have to recommend and find candidates. The delay forced the two offices to make an appointment on an interim basis for six months, rather than permanently, which is the limit of what it could do without Parliament’s approval.

The PMO clarified in a statement to *The Hill Times* that Giroux’s term was set to expire before the return of Parliament, and therefore a permanent replacement could not be made without a gap in the appointment.

Naming Jacques in the interim, the PMO said, ensured it could “follow due process” and appoint someone to lead the office full time “after the proper consultations are made.”

Jacques said he’s willing to stay on for a proper term as PBO after his six-month stint ends. But, he stressed that it was not up to him or even to the government to decide that, as approving the appointment is the prerogative of Parliament.

When stepping into Giroux’s shoes, Jacques said he made it clear to the PCO that he would be working in the same manner as his predecessor, and added the government was happy with that approach.

“They went on to say, ‘We want a strong PBO... Budget 2025 is going to be very important ... and we want a strong PBO to be in a position where they can help parliamentarians unpack the budget.’”

The federal budget will be tabled on Nov. 4, and the supplementary estimates will follow, among the many other major items on the office’s list.

May agrees Parliament should be involved in interim appointments

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, B.C.)

said she supports Jacques’ suggestion for a legislative amendment to ensure appointments aren’t made without Parliament’s consent.

“I think there should have been some kind of provision that when the Parliamentary Budget Officer is near the end of his or her term, and if it hasn’t been handled yet, there should be a default, automatic extension for six months while the process continues. There’s no harm that can come from making sure that the transition is smooth.”

Still, she is sympathetic to Prime Minister Mark Carney’s (Nepean, Ont.) predicament given the re-elected government had a lot on its plate after the April election.

“I imagine they’re still playing catch up. So I’ll give them the benefit of the doubt... It’s not the way it should be. You shouldn’t be asking someone with a 72 hour notice that you need to start as PBO,” she said.

“If this was a year from now, it would be shocking and unacceptable. Now, I am just prepared to face the reality, which I think most people in Ottawa have noticed, that they really aren’t fully aware of how to run [the Prime Minister’s Office],” she said. “And the PMO, for that matter, is too big. It has too much power, but these are basic things that should get done.”

The Hill Times also reached out to the Conservatives and NDP for their views on how the government handled the PBO’s appointment, but did not receive a response by deadline.

Both the Senate Finance Committee and the the House Government Operations and Estimates Committee (OGGO) previously passed motions urging Giroux’s reappointment earlier this year.

During Jacques’ appearance before OGGO last week, Conservative MP Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, Alta.) congratulated him, but said they were “disappointed” the government did not consider the will of the last committee.

New plans for PBO

Jacques told OGGO that though his office is exempt from Carney’s spending review, the PBO would voluntarily make an ongoing five-per-cent cut to its budget starting in 2026-27, which includes himself taking an

immediate \$50,000 reduction in his salary.

Jacques told *The Hill Times* he also plans to make some changes in the way work is delegated within the office. Analysts on his team, for example, will be stepping up to handle some of the office’s communications responsibilities, Jacques said.

“We lost Mr. Giroux ... he is easily one of the most effective communicators when it comes to financial and economic information in both official languages,” he said.

“There’s no easy replacement, and I’m certainly not a replacement for him.”

Managers, too, he revealed, will be given more discretion to make decisions around projects, dealing with parliamentarians, and signing off on projects.

In that environment, Jacques said, there will be enough scrutiny of the work being published to avoid any mistakes.

Last year, Giroux was widely criticized after he admitted to an “inadvertent error” in his office’s calculations of the impact of consumer carbon tax—including carbon tax rebates—on people’s pockets. The team re-ran the numbers and found that the cost was less than it had earlier estimated.

Jacques said he wasn’t involved in that report, but if a similar situation were to arise again, he would follow the steps that Giroux took—which is to flag the error publicly, redo the calculations, invite representatives from the Congressional Budget Office in the United States and the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis to vet the work, and publish a revised report.

But given the scale of their work, Jacques said, mistakes could still happen, in theory.

“It’s not about the mistakes ... as long as they’re not stupid, careless mistakes ... it’s how you react to them,” he said. “You have to be transparent about it. I’m very comfortable about how we reacted to it.”

While he stopped short of confirming that the error in the consumer carbon tax report was the nail in Giroux’s coffin, he said people are “welcome to draw their own conclusions.”

“They want everything that Mr. Giroux would have otherwise done... But they don’t want Mr. Giroux for some reason. I don’t know.”

“I don’t think the town is used to people saying, ‘I’m sorry, and we made a mistake.’”

“The government makes mistakes every day of the week,” he said. “That guy [Giroux] lost his job because he apologized and confessed, and he owned up to the truth.”

A version of this piece first appeared in Politics This Morning, your go-to source for insider news, analysis, and updates on where all the key political players are that day. Get more insider coverage directly to your inbox from The Hill Times’ editor Peter Mazereeuw and reporter Riddhi Kachhela in this subscriber-only daily newsletter.

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The Hill Times

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

Identifying the 20-plus members in Culture Minister Guilbeault's office

Brian McKay is deputy chief of staff and policy director, while Luke Guimond is director of official languages, and Vanessa Cranston leads parliamentary affairs.

Canadian Identity and Culture Minister **Steven Guilbeault**, who's also the minister responsible for official languages, has a 23-member team of staffers working full-time in his office.

Former PMO director **Hilary Leftick**'s hiring as Guilbeault's chief of staff was among the first post-election cabinet hirings reported by *Hill Climbers* in May. Climbers has since also reported on **Alisson Lévesque**'s hiring as director of communications to Guilbeault, and **Marie Froggatt**'s addition to the office.

Originally hired as executive assistant to the minister, Froggatt now wears the title of senior operations adviser.

Guilbeault has a separate—smaller—team supporting him in his capacity as Quebec lieutenant, led by chief of staff **Ann-Clara Vaillancourt**, but with 20 staffers in the culture office still to cover, that rundown will have to wait for another day.

Brian MacKay has been hired as deputy chief of staff and director of policy to Guilbeault.

MacKay has been working for successive Canadian heritage ministers—the previous long-standing name for Guilbeault's current portfolio—since 2020, starting as an Ontario regional affairs adviser during Guilbeault's previous turn in the post.

MacKay became a senior policy adviser after now-Quebec Liberal Leader **Pablo Rodriguez** took over as heritage minister after the 2021 election, and by 2023, under then-minister **Pascale St-Onge**, MacKay was serving as director of policy and stakeholder outreach—his most recent title. He's also a former operations and Ontario regional affairs adviser to then-science and sport minister **Kirsty Duncan**, and a past assistant to Liberal MP **Julie Dzerowicz** and then-Ontario Liberal MPP **Ann Hoggarth**.



Canadian Identity and Culture Minister Steven Guilbeault is scrummed by reporters outside a cabinet meeting in the West Block on May 14. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Dominic Morin has taken on the dual role of head of appointments and senior policy adviser to the minister. Morin has been working alongside MacKay in the heritage office since 2023, having first been hired as a policy adviser to then-minister St-Onge in the fall of that year. Morin holds bachelor, master, and doctorate degrees in philosophy, according to his LinkedIn profile, with his PhD coming from the École normale supérieure - PSL, in Paris. Morin first landed on the Hill right as he was wrapping up his PhD in 2022, and first worked as a Quebec regional affairs adviser to then-public services and procurement minister **Helena Jaczek**.

Also currently tackling policy for Guilbeault are senior policy advisers **Darren Choi** and **Madison Taipalus**, and policy advisers **Connor Fisher** and **Tao Fei**. Choi stepped in as acting policy director then-diversity, inclusion, and persons with disabilities minister **Kamal Khera** at the start of this year, and had been working for Khera since 2023, beginning as a special assistant for West and North regional affairs in her office as then-seniors minister. Choi followed Khera to the diversity portfolio after the July 2023 cabinet shuffle, becoming a policy and West and North regional adviser. Prior to working for Khera, Choi had most recently worked as a policy research assistant with the University of Alberta's China Institute. He also previously interned in then-Alberta Liberal MP **Amarjeet Sohi**'s office over the summer of 2019, among other past experience.

Taipalus is a former assistant to now-House Speaker **Francis Scarpaleggia** and has been working for Liberal ministers since 2018, beginning as a special assistant for West and North regional affairs to then-public services minister **Carla Qualtrough** and continuing under Qualtrough's portfolio predecessor, now-Foreign Affairs Minister **Anita Anand**.

Taipalus has since also been an Atlantic regional adviser to then-women and gender equality minister **Marc Ien**, and joined the heritage office as a policy adviser to then-minister St-Onge in the fall of 2023. Fisher has been working on the heritage file since



Dominic Morin is head of appointments and a senior policy adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Brian MacKay is deputy chief of staff and director of policy. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Madison Taipalus is a senior policy adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

March 2024 when he was hired as an Ontario regional adviser to then-minister St-Onge. Before then, he'd been an issues manager and senior special assistant for parliamentary affairs to then-labour and seniors minister **Seamus O'Regan**. Between 2021 and 2023, Fisher worked for then-seniors ministers **Deb Schulte** and Khera, starting as a special assistant for Atlantic regional affairs to Schulte, whom Fisher had previously supported as the MP for King-Vaughan, Ont.

Fei is new to the Hill and was last busy as a strategic initiatives producer for 221A, a non-profit in Vancouver focused on working with "artists and designers to research and develop social, cultural and ecological infrastructure," as described on its website. Fei's LinkedIn profile notes she's also a former manager of public funding and artist relations, and later executive producer, for the music festival POP Montreal, among other things.

Senior parliamentary affairs assistant **Daniel Krebs** is another carryover from St-Onge's team, which he joined in the fall of 2023 as a legislative assistant. Before then, Krebs was assistant to the parliamentary secretary in St-Onge's office as then-sport

minister. He's also an ex-aide to now-Secretary of State for Sport **Adam van Koeverden** as the MP for Milton, Ont. (now Burlington North-Milton West, Ont.).

Leading the official languages file for Guilbeault is director **Luke Guimond**. He was last busy as director of parliamentary affairs to then-official languages minister **Rachel Bendayan**.

A former assistant to Quebec Liberal MP **Anthony Housefather** and Ontario Liberal MPP **Lucille Collard**, Guimond landed his first cabinet-level job in the fall of 2023 when he

was hired as a legislative assistant to then-employment minister **Randy Boissonnault**. Guimond was later promoted to parliamentary affairs adviser and issues manager to Boissonnault, and stayed on after Liberal MP **Ginette Petitpas Taylor** took over as employment, workforce development, and official languages minister in November 2024.

Vanessa Cranston is director of parliamentary affairs. Though missed by *Hill Climbers* at the time, Cranston first stepped into the role under then-minister St-Onge at the end of 2024, and before then had done the same for then-rural economic development minister



Luke Guimond is director of official languages. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Tao Fei is a policy adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Continued on page 29

HILL CLIMBERS

Continued from page 28

Guidie Hutchings. A former communications officer with the office of the registrar at the Supreme Court of Canada, since landing on the Hill in 2016 Cranston has also worked as an assistant to New Brunswick Liberal MP **Serge Cormier**, and as manager of parliamentary affairs to then-immigration minister **Sean Fraser**.

Likewise focused on legislation is **Mathieu Lebon-Volia**, who's both a legislative assistant and assistant to Liberal MP **Madeleine Chenette** as one of two parliamentary secretaries to Guilbeault. He's a former assistant to then-Alberta MP **Randy Boissonnault**, and after the April 28 election, briefly worked for Boissonnault's riding successor, now-Emergency Management Minister **Eleanor Olszewski**, in her capacity as the new MP for Edmonton Centre, Alta. Lebon-Volia has also previously interned with the International Organization of La Francophonie as a Young Francophone Ambassador, amongst other past experience.

Sara Korajian Rankin is director of operations to Guilbeault. She's been working for federal heritage ministers since

Sara Korajian Rankin is director of operations. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

2018, starting as a policy adviser to then-minister Rodriguez, and is a former special assistant for West and North regional affairs in the Liberal research bureau (LRB), and a past assistant to British Columbia Liberal MP **Hedy Fry**.

Working closely with Korajian Rankin are senior operations adviser **Jerica Mariano**; operations adviser **Samantha Carter**, who covers Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba regional affairs; and operations adviser **Anika Riopel**, who also tackles Atlantic regional affairs and serves as assistant to Liberal

MP **David Myles**, the second of Guilbeault's two parliamentary secretaries. As well, **Sarah Hall** is currently on board as an operations and communications intern.

Mariano most recently worked at Liberal Party headquarters as an outreach adviser for a couple of months lead-

ing up to the April 28 general election and before then spent roughly three years working in the LRB, starting as an outreach, diversity, and inclusion adviser and executive assistant to the managing director, and ending as manager of outreach, diversity, and inclusion. She's also a former executive assistant in the offices of then-families ministers **Ahmed Hussen** and **Karina Gould**, and a former riding assistant to Hussen as the MP for York South-Weston, Ont.

Another new face on the Hill, Carter graduated from the University of Calgary with a bachelor's degree in inorganic chemistry last year, and has since been working as a sales associate at The Bike Shop in Calgary.

Riopel has spent the last eight years working for the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax, last as an education co-ordinator for the centre's Kelp Kurious project.



Samantha Carter is an operations adviser covering Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba regional affairs. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Operations adviser Anika Riopel covers Atlantic regional affairs. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Also covering regional desks for Guilbeault are **Kaitlyn Jonescu**, senior regional adviser for Ontario, and **Tinsae Bogale**, who was recently hired as B.C. regional adviser.

Jonescu first joined the heritage team under St-Onge in October 2023 as a special assistant for operations. She's a former executive assistant to O'Regan as then-labour minister, and previously spent the summer of 2022 as an intern to then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau's** chief of staff **Katie Telford**.

Working under communications director Lévesque are press secretary **Hermine Landry** and lead creative media adviser **Justin Millar**.

A former Hill guide, Landry was first hired as press secretary to Guilbeault in October 2024, during his time as then-environment minister, and spent the recent federal election helping write communications for the national Liberal campaign.

Millar previously held the same title in Fraser's office

as then-housing minister, and according to his LinkedIn profile, he also did the same for Liberal MP **Chrystia Freeland's** Liberal leadership campaign at the start of this year. A freelance photographer and drone pilot, Millar is also a past editor at Carpe Diem Photography.

Michael Sauvé is issues manager to Guilbeault. New to the Hill, Sauvé was most recently director of public affairs and communications with the Quebec Community Groups

Network, and principal consultant and founder of The Whole Hundred. His online CV includes a six-month run as a program lead with Data Sciences (of which current PMO principal secretary **Tom Pitfield** is a former CEO, and which has done work for the Liberal Party), and time spent as a senior account

director with Hill+Knowlton Strategies, and as director of digital and social with North Strategic.

Finally, **Radi Shahrouri** is executive assistant to Leftick as chief of staff.

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Hermine Landry is press secretary to the minister. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

NEWS

Canada remains at the 'wrong end of the data vacuum,' says Sen. Colin Deacon as Liberals preview AI, privacy legislation reboot

Continued from page 13

encouraging, but were undercut by a lack of clarity on the process.

The day after Champagne's appearance, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA), International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG), and more than 40 other Canadian civil liberties groups, experts, and academics issued an open letter to the minister highlighting their main concerns with the proposed draft of AIDA. Specifically, the signatories express concern that "shoehorning" AI regulation into Bill C-27 would hinder proper examination of AIDA and divert focus from the bill's privacy provisions. They also proposed key changes they argued were needed for AIDA,

such as recognizing privacy as a fundamental human right; committing to more meaningful consultation with a broader range of stakeholders "beyond industry leaders"; expanding AI regulation to cover both the public and private sectors, including government security agencies; and removing AI regulation from Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada's sole jurisdiction.

At the time, ICLMG told *The Hill Times* that, despite the amendments proposed by Champagne at the committee, its view was that AIDA needed to be "withdrawn, reworked, and reintroduced" as a separate piece of legislation from C-27.

In an interview with *The Hill Times* last week, the CCLA's

Tamir Israel said that while civil liberties groups hope to see legislation tabled this fall to address all aspects of reform, their priority is PIPEDA.

Specifically, Israel said the CCLA is hoping to see the exceptions to the previous legislation's consent requirement curtailed or removed entirely, including the broad latitude it gave to corporations to pursue their interests over the privacy rights of Canadians.

"If there is no need for consent, then there's no disincentive for using Canadians' data in a way they're not comfortable with," Israel explained. "The primary overarching framework of PIPEDA needs to be updated to reflect that privacy is a fundamental right, not something that

needs to be balanced with business objectives."

Additionally, Israel said that the new legislation needs greater monetary penalties for those in contravention of PIPEDA to incentivize compliance.

"Given the amount of revenue that can be derived from personal information these days, the penalties for misusing it or not having consent need to be on par or you won't get compliance," Israel explained. "Right now, there is no incentive to comply, and that's been a major gap in PIPEDA since it was first adopted."

While the CCLA has more concerns with the artificial intelligence aspect of C-27—and still believes that whatever new legislation is introduced should

be tabled separately from the PIPEDA and CPPA components—Israel said one of the major concerns in the previous bill was the exception it provided for the use of AI tools for national security purposes.

"That is just not an effective starting point for AI legislation," Israel said, noting that the exception covered not just AI tools used by the government, but any tool used in a broadly defined national security context.

Alongside removing that exception, Israel added that he hopes the government will take its lead from the European Union's AI regime, including the limitations imposed on facial recognition and other forms of biometric data collection in public spaces.

Deacon said that he believes that Canada should "take its time to get it right" on AI regulation, but said updating PIPEDA is of the utmost importance as regulating the collection and use of personal data is already downstream of the technology.

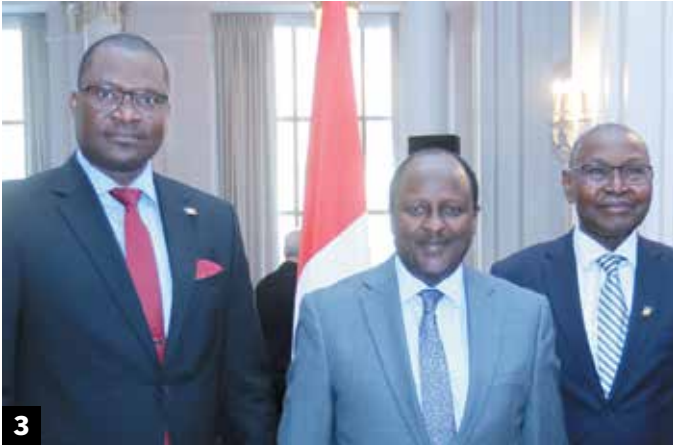
"We're at the wrong end of the data vacuum, and it's being used against us as a country," Deacon said. "The amount of data that is hoovered off us every single second of every day is just astonishing, and we can't afford to lose control of it."

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FEATURE

Chad celebrates at the Château

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



1. Chad Ambassador Bouroumdou Naloum gives a speech at a reception to mark his country's national day at the Château Laurier on Aug. 11. **2.** Naloum, left, and Canadian Ambassador-designate to Chad Marie-Claude Harvey. **3.** Mayara Kadingar, first secretary at the Embassy of Chad, left; High Commissioner of Tanzania Joseph Sokoine; and Naloum.

Malaysia parties on Preston



1. Malaysian High Commissioner Shazelina Zainul Abidin addresses guests at a reception marking her country's national day at Sala San Marco in Ottawa's Little Italy neighbourhood on Aug. 28. **2.** Zainul Abidin, right, and Malaysian Deputy High Commissioner Hardi Hamdin. **3.** Curry puffs, seafood spring rolls, and fried banana balls were among the treats on offer at the bash. **4.** Philippines Ambassador-designate Jose Victor V. Chan-Gonzaga, left, and Malaysian First Secretary Nor Aliaa Zainal Abidin. **5.** Chilean Ambassador Juan Carlos Perez de Arce, left, and Nepalese Ambassador Bharat Raj Paudyal.



Kazakhstan, Canada talk nuclear use



1. Kazakhstan Ambassador Dauletbek Kussainov, left, with moderator George Jacoby at the Kazakhstan-Canada Nuclear Dialogue event at the Senate of Canada Building on Aug. 27. **2.** Embassy of Korea chargé d'affaires Younggi Ahn, left, and Institute for Peace and Diplomacy's Fiona Nicholson. **3.** Former Canadian diplomat Margaret Skok, left, and Peggy Mason, president of the Rideau Institute. **4.** Global Affairs Canada's Jade Puddington, left, Kelly Cholvat, and Glen McPherson.



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.

Parliamentary Centre, Carleton University to host MP orientation session Sept. 26



New Liberal MP Pauline Rochefort, centre, speaks with colleagues during a House of Commons-run orientation session in the Lower Chamber on May 21. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 24

Bacon and Eggheads Breakfast—The Partnership Group for Science and Engineering hosts its first Bacon and Eggheads breakfast of the 2025-26 parliamentary year featuring Dr. Jackie Dawson from the University of Ottawa, who will speak on "Through the Melting Ice: Ship Traffic in Canada's Arctic." Wednesday, Sept. 24, at 7:30 a.m. ET in Room 100, Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

Lunch: 'Growing Canada's Defence Capabilities'—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a lunchtime discussion, "Homegrown Strength: Growing Canada's Defence Capabilities." Is Canada ready to strengthen its military and defence industrial base? Leaders from government, defence, and industry will talk readiness, procurement, and building a strong domestic supply chain. Wednesday, Sept. 24, at 12 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Register: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Ottawa Santis Soirée—Santis Health hosts its 2025 Ottawa Soirée, an annual celebration of partnerships, growth, and the inspiring people who help shape Canada's health system. Wednesday, Sept. 24, at 5 p.m. at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. Register: santishealth.ca.

Politics and the Pen Gala—The Writers' Trust of Canada hosts the Politics and the Pen Gala, its annual fundraiser where the \$25,000 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing will also be presented. Location to be announced. Details: writerstrust.com.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 25

Lunch: 'Canada Builds on Oil and Natural Gas'—The Halifax Chamber of Commerce hosts a lunch event, "Canada Builds on Oil and Natural Gas," featuring Lisa Baiton, president and CEO of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. Thursday, Sept. 25, at 11:30 a.m. AT The Prince George Hotel, 1725 Market St., Halifax. Details: business.halifaxchamber.com.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 26

Orientation for New MPs—The Parliamentary Centre and Carleton University host the first session of an Orientation for New Members of Parliament. Programming includes a comprehensive overview of legislative responsibilities, ethical frameworks and protocol not covered in the official orientation include the role of the Speaker, the Privy Council, public engagement strategies, and public

opinion dynamics. Lunch and refreshments provided. Spouses welcome. Friday, Sept. 26, at 8:30 a.m. ET in Room 035 in the West Block. Register: parlcent@parlcent.org.

Minister Solomon to Deliver Remarks—Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation Evan Solomon will deliver remarks on "Building the Economy of the Future and The AI Nation: The Urgent Mission to make Canada AI and Quantum Strong," hosted by the Empire Club of Canada. Friday, Sept. 26, at 11:30 a.m. ET at 401 Bay St., Simpson Tower, 8th Floor, Toronto. Register: empireclubofcanada.com.

MONDAY, SEPT. 29

Welcoming the House Back—The Government Relations Institute of Canada and *Politico* host an exciting evening of networking and trivia, free for GRIC members. Monday, Sept. 29, at 5 p.m. ET at the Métropolitain Brasserie Restaurant, 700 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Details: gric-irgc.ca.

MONDAY, SEPT. 29—TUESDAY, SEPT. 30

Couchiching 2025—The Canadian International Council and the Aga Khan Museum host the two-day Couchiching annual conference on the theme "Securing Canada's Atlantic Future." This high-level strategic dialogue bringing together policymakers, thought leaders, and experts to provide insights into how to navigate Canada's role in an era of global upheaval. Monday, Sept. 29, to Tuesday, Sept. 30, at the Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wynford Dr., Toronto. Details: thecic.org/couchiching2025.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 1

Michigan Governor to Deliver Remarks—Governor of Michigan Gretchen Whitmer will deliver remarks, "The Canada-Michigan Relationship," followed by a fireside chat moderated by journalist Steve Paiken, hosted by the Empire Club of Canada and the American Chamber of Commerce in Canada. Wednesday, Oct. 1, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre 255 Front St. W., Toronto. Details: amchamcanada.ca.

Coffee Association of Canada Reception—The Coffee Association of Canada hosts its annual Parliamentary Reception. This event will mark the official launch of the Parliamentary Coffee Caucus, a new non-partisan forum designed to foster engagement between Members of Parliament and Canada's dynamic coffee sector.

Wednesday, Oct. 1 at 6 p.m. ET at Little Victories Coffee, 44 Elgin St.

THURSDAY, OCT. 2

Fireside Chat: 'Energy, Ambition and Canada's Future'—Former Liberal cabinet minister Seamus O'Regan will moderate a fireside chat entitled "Compete or Retreat: Energy, Ambition and Canada's Future," featuring Greg Ebel, president and CEO of Enbridge Inc. Thursday, Oct. 2, at 11:30 a.m. ET, at The Carlu, 444 Yonge St. #7, Toronto, happening in person and online. Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

Empowering Women Through Food Security—Compassion Canada, World Renew and Thrive for Good host "Empowering Women and Girls to Build Stronger Communities Through Food Security," an event highlighting how conflict, extreme climate events, and economic shocks interact to deepen vulnerabilities, including unequal access to the livelihood resources required for recovery and growth. Thursday, Oct. 2, at 3 p.m. ET at the Delta Hotel, 101 Lyon St. N, Ottawa. RSVP: adeform@beaconnorthstrategies.com.

Ex-CBC Reporter Brian Stewart to Discuss New Book—The Balsillie School of International Affairs hosts former CBC foreign correspondent and award-winning reporter Brian Stewart who will discuss his new book *On the Ground: My Life as a Foreign Correspondent*. Thursday, Oct. 2, at 7 p.m. ET at CIGI Auditorium, 67 Erb St. W., Waterloo, Ont. Details: balsillie-school.ca.

FRIDAY, OCT. 3

Book Event with Catherine Lang—Author Catherine Lang will discuss her 2024 book, *Embedded: The Irreconcilable Nature of War, Loss and Consequence*, at an event hosted by the Canadian International Council's National Capital chapter. Friday, Oct. 3, at 5:30 p.m. ET at The Bridge Public House, 1 Donald St., Ottawa. Details: thecic.org.

MONDAY, OCT. 6

An Evening with David Peterson—The Pearson Centre hosts an evening with David Peterson, celebrating the 40th anniversary of his becoming premier of Ontario in 1985. Monday, Oct. 6, at 6:30 p.m. ET at One King West, Toronto. Details: thepearsoncentre.ca.

TUESDAY, OCT. 7

Panel: 'The Aftermath of October 7'—The Macdonald-Laurier Institute

hosts a panel, "The Aftermath of October 7." Leading experts Hussein Aboubakar Mansour, Casey Babb, and Einat Wilf will examine the ongoing conflict in Gaza, Israel's defence against escalating Islamist terror, and the global forces reshaping the region's future. Tuesday, Oct. 7, at 9 a.m. ET happening online. Register via Eventbrite.

Walrus Talks: 'Growing Canadian Productivity'—The Walrus Talks hosts a webinar, "Growing Canadian Productivity," featuring Tima Bansal, Canada Research Chair in Business Sustainability; Trevor Tombe, economics professor, University of Calgary; Akolisa Ufodiye, associate professor, School of Administrative Studies, York University; and Val Walker, CEO, Business + Higher Education Roundtable. Tuesday, Oct. 7, at 12 p.m. ET happening online: thewalrus.ca.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 8

World Mental Health Day—The Union of Safety and Justice Employees hosts its annual World Mental Health Day reception in support of Canada's frontline federal public safety personnel, and those who suffer from Occupational Stress Injuries. Members of Parliament, Senators, and staff are welcome. Wednesday, Oct. 8, at in Room 310, Wellington Building, 180 Wellington St. RSVP reem@kitpublicaffairs.ca.

Bike Day on the Hill—Environment Minister Julie Dabrusin and Senator Marty Deacon host Bike Day on the Hill 2025, spearheaded by national cycling advocacy organization Vélo Canada Bikes. This non-partisan event engages parliamentarians, local and national leaders, and cycling supporters in a celebration of everyday cycling in Canada. There will be a group photo, Parliamentary Slow Bike Challenge on the Parliament Hill lawn, and a reception in the Valour Building, 151 Sparks St. Wednesday, Oct. 8, at 5 p.m. ET. Register online. Contact: ed@velocanadabikes.org.

THURSDAY, OCT. 9

Bank of Canada Senior Deputy Governor to Deliver Remarks—Carolyn Rogers, senior deputy governor of the Bank of Canada, will discuss productivity, competition and innovation in Canada's financial sector at a breakfast event hosted by the Canadian Club Toronto. Thursday, Oct. 9, at 7:15 a.m. ET at The Hyatt Regency Toronto, 370 King St. W. Register: canadianclub.org.

Climate at a Crossroads—The Walrus magazine hosts "Climate

at a Crossroads," a day-long event exploring how climate disinformation is restraining progress, and how to ensure democratic governance in this new and contested climate crisis landscape. Participants include former Liberal environment minister Catherine McKenna, with a keynote featuring Charlotte Scaddan, senior adviser on Information Integrity, United Nations Global Communications. Thursday, Oct. 9, at 9:30 a.m. at 50 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

CDANXT: Advancing Canada's Health Economy Conference—Research Canada hosts its national conference, "CDANXT: Advancing Canada's Health Economy Conference," featuring key speakers and stakeholders from the health research and innovation ecosystem to explore how a thriving health economy can transform our economy, productivity, and competitiveness. Thursday, Oct. 9, at 9:30 a.m. at 50 Sussex Dr., Toronto. Details: researchcanada.org/national-conference/.

CPAC's Fall Parliamentary Reception—CPAC celebrates its legacy of connecting Canadians to their democracy with an evening of insightful conversation, refreshments, and entertainment. By invitation only. Thursday, Oct. 9, at 5:30 p.m. ET in Room 100, Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa.

REEL Politics Film Series—Tonight is opening of an eight-night fundraiser for the Jaimie Anderson Parliamentary Internships. The REEL Politics Film Series presents thought-provoking films and engaging discussions screening today, with future screening dates on Nov. 6 and Dec. 4, 2025; and Jan. 8, Feb. 5, March 5, and April 2, 2026. The first screening is on Thursday, Oct. 9, at the ByTowne Cinema, 325 Rideau St., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, OCT. 10

North America's Nuclear Renaissance—Canada 2020 hosts "North America's Nuclear Renaissance," a gathering of nuclear advocates, clean energy financiers, policy architects, and system operators working to bridge ambition and deployment. Speakers include Jigar Shah, former director of the U.S. Department of Energy Loan Programs Office; and James L. Connaughton, former chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Friday, Oct. 10, at 8 a.m. ET, at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: canada2020.ca.

ParlSec Sudds to Talk Mental Health—Parliamentary Secretary Jenna Sudds will take part in "Courageous Conversations with Politicians," discussion on mental health. Other participants include former Ontario MPP Lisa MacLeod, former Ottawa City councillors Mathieu Fleury and Keith Elgi, and current City of Brockville councillor Katherine Hobbs. Friday, Oct. 10, at 8:30 a.m. at Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Register via Eventbrite.

Superintendent of Financial Institutions to Deliver Remarks—Superintendent of Financial Institutions Peter Routledge will weigh in on Canada's rapidly evolving economic landscape, and how the financial system is adapting to the pace of change in a morning presentation hosted by the Economic Club of Canada. Friday, Oct. 10, at 8:30 a.m. ET at the Hilton Toronto, 145 Richmond St. W. Details: economicclub.ca.

TUESDAY, OCT. 14

Chief of Defence Staff at the Mayor's Breakfast—Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Jennie Carrigan will be the special guest at the Mayor's Breakfast, hosted by Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and the *Ottawa Business Journal*. Tuesday, Oct. 14, at 7 a.m. ET at Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Details: business.ottawabot.ca.

Lunch: 'Reimagining Canada's Trade for a New Global Era'—Alison Nankivell, president and CEO of Export Development Canada, will take part in a roundtable luncheon hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, Oct. 14, 12 p.m. ET at C.D. Howe Institute, 110 Yonge St., Suite 800, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

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A LINE ITEM IN THE BUDGET
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