



# Policy

Canadian Politics and Public Policy

*Welcome to Policy magazine's special issue on big ideas. The world is driven by big ideas; in politics and public policy, in economics, in technology and, increasingly, in medicine. All of this in a world transformed; in a digital age. As Canada gets back down to the business of governing after a week of heightened focus on national security, policy makers, innovators and visionaries will have their eyes set on a future built on today's best big ideas.*

## In This October – November Issue:

- Contributing writer [Robin Sears](#) offers some notable 20th century examples of political leadership, from Brian Mulroney and Ronald Reagan on free trade, to Pierre Trudeau on the Charter of Rights to Nelson Mandela on unity and reconciliation. These were transformational policies on which leaders were prepared to spend, rather than hoard, their political capital. Where is such leadership today? Sadly lacking, concludes Sears.
- Our lead foreign affairs writer, [Jeremy Kinsman](#), looks at a world in turmoil in late 2014—from ISIS to Ebola, from Ukraine to Hong Kong—and suggests that Canada, the US and Mexico should heed Reagan's 1979 call for "a North American Accord," beyond free trade, "to make the continent 'the strongest, most prosperous and self-sufficient area on earth.'"
- BMO Vice Chair [Kevin Lynch](#), a former clerk of the Privy Council, offers an assessment of Canada's prospects in today's profoundly changing world. In an era of multipolarity, economic realignment and disruptive technological change, Lynch writes that Canada is hindered by incrementalism and "short-termism" in public policy making. He offers a clear assessment of Canada's comparative and competitive strengths and challenges in the global economy.
- [Gordon McBean](#), president of the International Council for Science, writes that "sustainable development needs to be implemented to enable future generations to meet their needs for an ethical and equitable planet." A truly big idea.
- From Big Data to Big Ideas, [Pierre Meulien](#), [Fiona Brinkman](#) and [Jennifer Gardy](#) write how genomics will change our world in health care, industry and the energy-environment space with a "breathtaking wealth of new information" to be "digested and directed."
- And [Stephen Scherer](#), Head of Applied Genomics at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, makes a strong case that Canada is already one of the world's leading genomics countries. "When I attend international conferences, everyone is talking about what is happening across Canada."
- Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) will play a critical role in modernizing Canadian health care, predicts [Joe Natale](#), president and CEO of TELUS, a leading provider in the field. Noting that EMRs have a penetration rate of only 57 per cent of Canadian doctors, Natale writes that: "Governments across Canada need to drive EMR adoption to 100 per cent of physicians by 2020. They can do that by changing the compensation model for physicians and health care professionals, linking pay to outcomes that are tracked through EMRs."
- [Carolyn Dudley](#) and four colleagues from the University of Calgary consider the challenges, in both childhood and adulthood, to the one Canadian in 68 with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and note that "the incremental costs of supporting the ASD population over its neurotypical peers in Canada can be estimated to \$3.4 billion for each annual birth cohort." What's to be done? They propose a very achievable six-point policy framework.
- Immigration Minister [Chris Alexander](#) writes that while Canada has received more than two million newcomers since 2006, the emphasis in immigration is shifting from a supply-based to a demand-driven system, closer to labour market needs.
- Contributing writers [Derek Burney](#) and [Fen Osler Hampson](#) offer some big ideas of their own on Canada's role in the world in an excerpt from their book *Brave New Canada*. The book is already in a second printing from McGill-Queen's University Press. In a strong review, John Barrett writes that the authors offer "clear insights and compelling recommendations."
- And in a review of *The Morning After*, by Chantal Hébert with Jean Lapierre, Historica Canada President [Anthony Wilson-Smith](#) writes of the authors' "many and startling" revelations in the backstory of the 1995 Quebec referendum, in which Canada was almost lost. A gripping story, and a national bestseller.
- Finally, in a *Guest Column*, Green Party Leader [Elizabeth May](#) looks back at a big idea that really worked—the 1987 Montreal Protocol on ozone depletion, which *The Economist* also rates as the most effective mitigating policy against climate change, by far.

Enjoy the issue.