

Canadian Politics and Public Policy

# Policy



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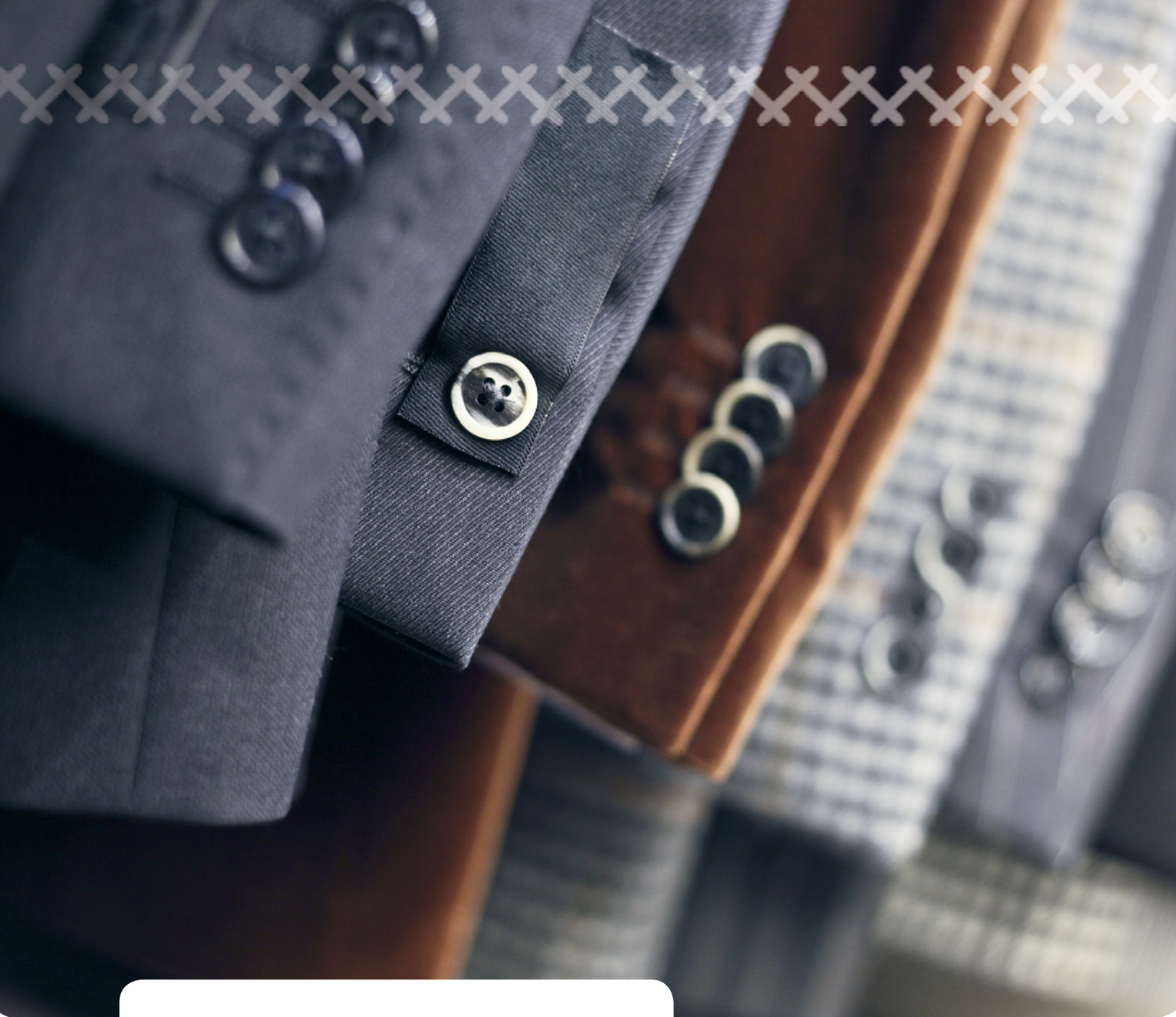
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# Policy

## Canadian Politics and Public Policy

### EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

L. Ian MacDonald

liamacdonald@policymagazine.ca

### ASSOCIATE EDITOR AND

DEPUTY PUBLISHER

Lisa Van Dusen

lvandusen@policymagazine.ca

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Thomas S. Axworthy,

Andrew Balfour, Yaroslav Baran,  
Derek H. Burney, Catherine Cano,  
Margaret Clarke, Celine Cooper,  
Rachel Curran, Susan Delacourt,  
Graham Fraser, Dan Gagnier,  
Martin Goldfarb, Sarah Goldfeder,  
Patrick Gossage, Frank Graves,  
Shachi Kurl, Brad Lavigne,  
Kevin Lynch, Jeremy Kinsman,  
Andrew MacDougall, Peter Mansbridge,  
Carissima Mathen, Velma McColl,  
David McLaughlin, David Mitchell,  
Don Newman, Geoff Norquay,  
Fen Osler Hampson, Robin V. Sears,  
Gil Troy, Lori Turnbull, Jaime Watt,  
Anthony Wilson-Smith

### WEB DESIGN

Nicolas Landry

policy@nicolaslandry.ca

### SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Grace MacDonald

gmacdonald@policymagazine.ca

### GRAPHIC DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Monica Thomas

monica@foothillsgraphics.ca

## Policy

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Jagmeet Singh

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From the Editor / L. Ian MacDonald

## Campaign 2019

Welcome to our special pre-election issue, Campaign 2019. This full issue on the campaign sets the stage for the October 21 election. It's all here—the polling, the policies and the players—at the national level and across the country.

Our cover package includes looks at the four main parties and their leaders by seasoned strategists. Then we consider the main issues, from climate change and carbon taxes, to pipelines. We look at Canadian policy keystones, from fiscal frameworks and health care to foreign policy. Progress on women's issues is also on the campaign agenda.

Lori Turnbull of Dalhousie University takes us through a key set of numbers, specifically the 170 seats needed to form a majority government in the 338-seat House. There are many ways to get there, but if they fall short, that's another story called minority government.

Which brings us to the four main parties, their leaders, and what they need to do in the campaign. For Justin Trudeau, this is not looking like a campaign of “sunny ways” but one in which he will be tested on his record.

For John Delacourt, former director of communications of the Liberal Research Bureau, this is a test whose outcome should not be taken for granted. For Conservative strategist Yaroslav Baran, the campaign offers an opportunity to showcase the Scheer strength, in a manner of speaking, of the Tory leader. While Trudeau is winning the charisma contest, Scheer could strike a role as the soccer dad.

Former federal NDP president Brian Topp writes that there is no point in the New Democrats simply running

to get rid of Trudeau since “The short road to doing this is to elect a Conservative government.” For Elizabeth May and the Greens, the 2019 election represents a moment. As Ziya Tong writes, the question is how May will weather the scrutiny.

In the modern era, democracies are aware of threats to their elections, of which the 2016 U.S. election cycle was the most obvious example. Democratic Institutions Minister Karina Gould writes of Canada's protective and pre-emptive response. The other question is whether populism is growing in Canada. Patrick Gossage, former press advisor to Pierre Trudeau, wonders *Could it Happen Here?*

One of the mega-issues in this campaign is bound to be climate change and carbon taxes, which Don Newman explores in *The 'Big E' Election—Energy and the Environment*.

After a 2015 campaign in which fiscal policy played a surprising role, former Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page examines the Trudeau government's record and asks *Is Fiscal Responsibility an Issue in the 2019 Campaign?*

With gender parity having been a major theme of the Trudeau government's first term, Helaina Gaspard and Emily Woolen of the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy look at Canada's gender-based analysis in *Because it's 2019*.

Foreign Affairs is a seldom a talking point in Canadian campaigns, though it's never far from voters' minds. Our foreign affairs hand, Jeremy Kinsman, sizes up foreign policy in this campaign.

Health care is back as a ballot question. “For the first time in a long

time,” writes Shachi Kurl of the Angus Reid Institute, “party leaders find themselves compelled to say something about our physical well being.”

In a guest column, Diabetes Canada President Jan Hux asks whether the importing of insulin by the U.S. “raises concerns of potential drug shortages on this side of the border.” She calls it Canada's “own diabetes crisis.”

Most campaigns have defining moments and in the modern Canadian political era, none more so than the 1984 leaders' debate, which changed the rules and rewards of the game. Peter Mansbridge captures the drama of the exchange between John Turner and Brian Mulroney. Taken to task for a series of deathbed Liberal patronage appointments, Turner said lamely: “I had no option.” To which Mulroney famously replied: “You had an option, sir, you could have done better.” History was made at that moment. Thirty-five years on, they still talk about it.

And, in his regular column, Don Newman provides a prescription for mitigating chaos in the event of a minority House.

Finally, we offer timely reviews of two important books of this season. Former *Maclean's* Editor-in-Chief Bob Lewis looks at *Trudeau: The Education of a Prime Minister* and finds that John Ivison's biography “fairly bristles with anecdotes and examples of a flawed prime ministry.” And, Robin Sears is struck by the personal courage of NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh in his autobiography, *Love & Courage*.

In our November-December edition, we'll have our election wrap-up and analysis of where Canada goes from here. See you then, and remember to vote. **P**



# The Road to 170

*It may not be as widely maligned as the Electoral College south of the border, but Canada's system of first-past-the-post representation can be equally unrepresentative of the national vote. As Dalhousie University's Lori Turnbull points out, the key numbers to watch in the run-up to the election are not the national polling spreads but the provincial breakdowns.*

## Lori Turnbull

In the lead-up to the 2019 general election, public opinion polls remained inconclusive as to which party will form a government and how. The Liberals and the Conservatives were in a statistical tie in terms of national support at 32 vs. 33 per cent, according to polling published by Abacus on August 19. As we know, however, national support does not determine the outcome of an election. Election results are defined by political parties' shares of the seats in the House of Commons; the popular vote doesn't elect anybody. Of course, there is a connection between vote share and seat share, but the first-past-the-post electoral system has the effect of carving up the national vote into 338 constituencies, each with its own election. Whichever candidate comes first in each riding wins and parties are not compensated for any discrepancy between their share of seats and their portion of the national vote. The legitimacy of this system is a continual source of debate in Canada, and is a topic that is sure to come up in the 2019 campaign.

In the public opinion polls published frequently during the pre-election period, national support numbers give us a sense of where voters are leaning and whether parties are growing or declining in popularity relative to

one another. These polls can be fun to read, and are indispensable tools for those of us prone to entering office election pools, but they must also be understood as generalizations that can obscure important realities regarding how the vote will break down regionally and locally. Again, it's the seats rather than the votes themselves that determine government formation, and regional numbers paint a more accurate picture than national ones.

**“ Election results are defined by political parties' shares of the seats in the House of Commons; the popular vote doesn't elect anybody. ”**

For political parties vying for power in a parliamentary system such as ours, a majority government is the holy grail. Equipped with most of the seats in the House and Canada's strong tradition of party discipline, a majority government prime minister can govern almost unilaterally and decisively, without too many obstacles to pursuing the party's agenda.

The magic number for a majority these days is 170 seats. The House is populated according to the constitutional principle of representation by population; so, when the parties are looking at the country's regions and provinces to find their prospective path to a majority government, size matters. Winning the most seats in Ontario is more politically lucrative than winning the most seats in Atlantic Canada. That said, every seat counts and a small region can be key to giving a party what it needs to meet the threshold for a majority.

The regional breakdown of the House of Commons looks like this: Ontario is the most populous “region” with 121 seats; Quebec is second-largest with 78 seats; British Columbia elects 42 members of Parliament, Alberta 34, the Prairies 28, Atlantic Canada 32, and each territory has one MP. Historically, the Liberals have dominated in Ontario and Atlantic Canada, often picking up the majority of Ontario seats or even all of the seats in the Atlantic region. In 2015, it took broadcasters virtually no time at all to announce that the Liberals had won all 32 seats in Atlantic Canada (for those of us watching from that side of the country, the whole thing was a bit anticlimactic—no matter which party you were supporting.) The previous elections had gone nowhere near as well for the Liberals, as the Conservatives and the NDP elected 14 and six MPs respectively and the Liberals elected 12.

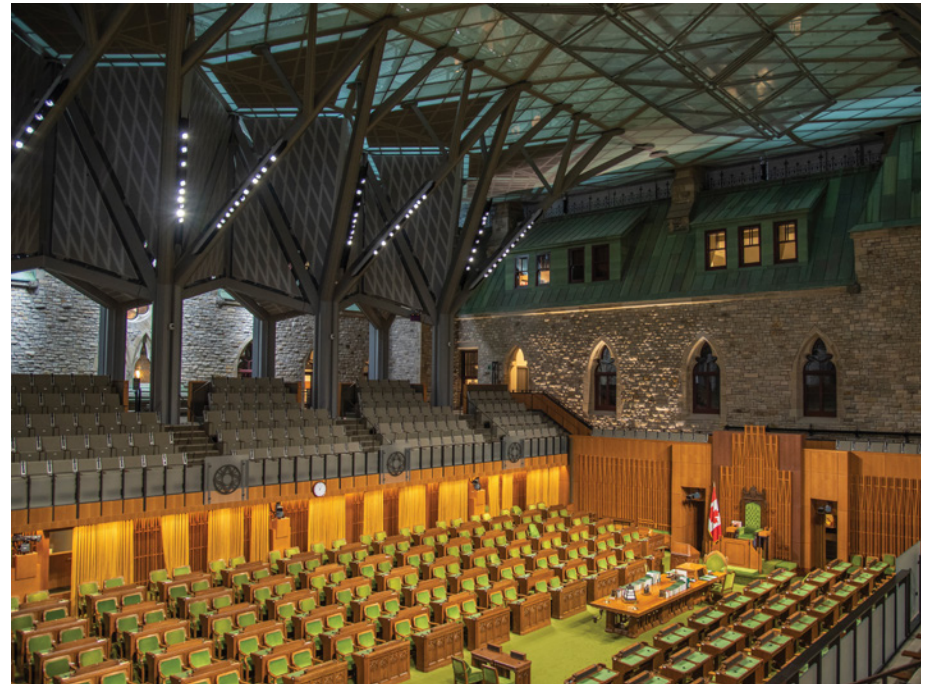
The likelihood of the Liberals sweeping Atlantic Canada again is low, particularly since the Conservatives and the NDP both have strong roots in the area and will reclaim some of the seats that had been deemed “safe” for them in previous elections. Also, given the success

that the Greens have had in provincial elections in Atlantic Canada, it is possible that their results could penetrate the federal/provincial divide.

As for Ontario, the Liberals blew it in 2011, winning a previously unthinkable 11 seats. But this requires some explanation. All three times that Stephen Harper and the Conservatives formed government (2006, 2008, and 2011), it was with significant support in Ontario after having merged the federal right-wing parties, the Progressive Conservatives and the Canadian Alliance, into one Conservative Party. In the federal election in 2000, by comparison, the Liberals elected MPs in 100 of the province's then 103 ridings; in 2004, the number dropped to 75 out of 106. Harper's Conservatives took 40 Ontario seats to the Liberals' 54 in 2006, and took the lead in 2008 with 51 Ontario seats compared to the Liberal's 38. In 2011, Harper's only majority government came with its strongest showing in Ontario—73 of what was then 108 seats in the province. In 2015, the Liberals took the lead in the province again with 80 of 121 seats. It's possible that many Ontario voters will see a Liberal vote as an effective way to hold Premier Doug Ford in check; this would help the Liberals maintain their stronghold in the province, which will be essential to their forming a second government. Summer polling data favours a first-place finish for the Liberals in Ontario.

Quebec has been key to the success of the NDP in recent years, with the party taking 59 of the province's 75 seats in 2011. But that was an historical exception that can be attributed to a number of factors, including the unprecedented popularity of the late NDP leader Jack Layton and the collapse of both the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois in the province. The Liberals claimed 40 of Quebec's 78 seats in 2015, the NDP were reduced to 16 and the Conservatives took 12.

Historically, the Conservatives have dominated in the prairie provinces and are expected to do so in 2019. Some of the Liber-



The Green Chamber in the West Block, where majorities are now made, or not, at 170. *House of Commons photo*

**“It’s possible that many Ontario voters will see a Liberal vote as an effective way to hold Premier Doug Ford in check; this would help the Liberals maintain their stronghold in the province, which will be essential to their forming a second government.”**

al MPs elected in the region in 2015—four in Alberta, one in Saskatchewan and seven in Manitoba—could be vulnerable, including in areas like Edmonton and Calgary, from which the Prime Minister drew cabinet ministers and parliamentary secretaries. B.C. is often the most difficult region in the country for which to make political predictions. With 42 seats, it is treated as a rich area for growth potential for virtually all parties. In 2015, the Liberals elected 17 MPs, the NDP 14, the Conservatives 10 and the Greens 1. All of them will be looking to make gains. Summer polling showed the Conservatives in the lead at just over 30 per

cent of the popular vote in B.C., a few points ahead of the Liberals, with the NDP and the Greens trailing in the high teens. The results will depend on how the votes break down on a constituency basis.

Perhaps you have noticed that there are no seat projections here. That is intentional. There are pollsters and data analysts who are better equipped to give you those numbers. I rely on their findings, again, for that office election pool and to get a sense of where voters' heads are. It is worth looking into the regional numbers to get a clearer sense of how things will shake out in October. The parties can take nothing for granted, not even voter turnout. There are fewer committed voters with every election, which means that parties are actively competing for a greater share of the votes and have relatively fewer loyalists who show up for them every time. This makes for frantic, compulsive campaigning. Judging by the numbers over the summer, it's possible that no party will get to 170 seats. In which case, welcome to a minority House. **P**

*Dr. Lori Turnbull is the Director of the School of Public Administration at Dalhousie University.*





Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau at an election campaign rally in Toronto Centre, 2015. Alex Guibord Flickr photo

## Sunny Ways Redux? Not so Fast

*The 2015 Liberal campaign that propelled Justin Trudeau from third place to a decisive majority will go down in political lore as a textbook, near-seamless race. But as the cliché goes, campaigning and governing are not the same thing, whether in poetry, prose or spoken word. The months between the first 100 days and the last have been eventful and, as former Liberal advisor John Delacourt writes, not the stuff of sure things.*

**John Delacourt**

The conventional wisdom is that the October federal election will be a referendum less on what the Liberal government has achieved than on Trudeau himself. That will be a frustrating turn of events for Liberals who point to a strong report card despite challenges no one could have predicted. Yet it has been, as former U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld would say, the “known unknown” of brand corrosion that has led to this state of affairs, less the performance of de-

livering a strong mandate than the unforced errors in management that have provided Opposition Leader Andrew Scheer with a very real opportunity to defeat what seemed an invincible majority four years ago.

The Trudeau government came in with a bold agenda, outlined by a campaign platform that spoke of resetting the course of governing on a number of fronts: Indigenous reconciliation, the environment and climate change, “Canada’s place in the world.” Even how Canadians elected their members of Parliament would be subject to review and study, with the promise of electoral reform. Fiscal prudence and wise management of the government’s finances would be affirmed. And guiding it all, the priorities of a struggling middle class “and those hoping to join it” were to be the lodestar for the next four years. This was the broad constituency Trudeau won over during the 2015 campaign. It was an electorate who, reportedly, from both external and internal polling, hadn’t felt any measurable improvement in their finances and quality of life, despite the economy’s slow, steady resurgence from the recession of 2008. A strong trio of initiatives would be put in place almost immediately: a middle class tax cut, a Canada Child Benefit and a revamped Canada Pension Plan to lay the foundations of long-term economic growth for the “minivan families,” those populating the suburbs of Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, whom the Trudeau Liberals had relied on to kick-start their campaign and bring them their resounding majority victory.

Just barely a year into power, the ground beneath the government began to shift precipitously, and it played out in concentric circles—from the international to the inter-governmental and finally at the cabinet level—for this government. The full implications of a Trump presidency came to the fore with the renegotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the implementation of tariffs target-

**“ It could be argued that, given all that has occurred over the last four years, a Conservative government would not have fared any better or worse, certainly not in dealing with Trump. In fact, the story of the trade negotiations, if it is ever fully told, could reveal how expertly Trudeau’s team managed the unmanageable. ”**

ed at steel and aluminum production here in Canada. Strained relations with our biggest trading partner required the focus of Trudeau’s PMO and his cabinet, as they sought to counter any further threats to our industries, not least the auto and agricultural sectors. What was to follow at the provincial level was the formation of a resurgent Conservative beachhead in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and, finally, Alberta.

**“ With close to 300,000 children lifted out of poverty by the Canada Child Benefit and employment numbers for well-paying, full-time work better than they have been in decades, those hoping to join the middle class do have better prospects. ”**

This new coalition put the government’s ambitious plan to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions—“the carbon tax”—in its sights. Outlying British Columbia elected an NDP government that was no less congenial, particularly on energy sector projects. With the Trans Mountain pipeline project, initially supported by Trudeau and suddenly put in jeopardy by B.C.’s new government, Ottawa opted to

purchase it while it was under further review. It was an outcome that seemed to please no one, despite the stated intention of balancing the concerns of Indigenous communities and environmental groups with the imperatives of economic development. Yet the final, arguably more seismic shift for the Trudeau government to contend with came from within, with the SNC-Lavalin affair creating a rift that led to the eventual expulsion from caucus of two of Trudeau’s strongest ministers, Jody Wilson Raybould and Jane Philpott. From the hairline cracks of NAFTA to the emerging fault lines at the provincial level to the tectonic shift in fortunes over the last few months, who could have predicted such a turn of events back in 2015? At least that is the familiar line of defence.

**Y**et all these events do not really seem to have been decisive. It could be argued that, given all that has occurred over the last four years, a Conservative government would not have fared any better or worse, certainly not in dealing with Trump. In fact, the story of the trade negotiations, if it is ever fully told, could reveal how expertly Trudeau’s team managed the unmanageable. And with the dynamic of the federal government versus the provinces, at least Trudeau can notch two Supreme Court victories with regard to the implementation of carbon pricing. Crucially, with this comparative argument of imagining the other party in power, the Conservatives may have also followed international precedent and



implemented the deferred prosecution agreement when faced with the prospect of an employer like SNC-Lavalin no longer being eligible for procurement contracts. The strongest defence is less conjectural; the Liberals have “gotten the big things right” for growth and development. With close to 300,000 children lifted out of poverty by the Canada Child Benefit and employment numbers for well-paying, full-time work better than they have been in decades, those hoping to join the middle class do have better prospects. All of these factors should be more than consolation, they should be buoying the Liberals’ prospects for another mandate. However, it is the approval numbers on Trudeau himself, which have been in a steady decline, that truly weigh the heaviest on the minds of those contemplating the campaign ahead.

This was the known unknown back in 2015. There was a cautionary tone established, and at least a stated means to address the moment if and when the shine started to come off Trudeau. His team knew from polling that the middle class branding of the government had to be sacrosanct. Any apparent deviation was, as one advisor told me, “like kryptonite;” Canadians would punish Trudeau himself for signs of hypocrisy in this regard. And they had on the face of it a contingency plan; what would help prevent too much slippage in the polls, if such kryptonite were uncovered, was a cabinet and caucus fully empowered to communicate the government’s mandate effectively, using the strategic thinking and 2.0 tactics on social media that were so effective for Trudeau himself in the campaign. The next four years were about decentralizing the issues management and the messaging so that if the shine was off the PM, the team branding would already be in place as a countervailing factor.

And this is where promise was never really fulfilled. From the moving expenses debacle with some of this government’s most senior advisors,

followed by the Aga Khan vacation and then the perceived unserious approach to bilateral relations with the India trip, there has been more than enough kryptonite to go around. Those minivan families could look to each development and wonder just how much this government really understood their lives and priorities. And as for the mitigating measures to address risks like these, there is no effective empowerment of Trudeau’s front bench to communicate—or indeed personify—the government’s progressive mandate. “Make the message your own” is the mantra of Ottawa media trainers for a reason. A telltale sign this wasn’t going to be carried too far occurred when, recovering from the nadir of Bill Morneau’s management of his small business tax cut controversy, Trudeau himself took questions for the Finance Minister—standing right beside him.

**“The next four years were about decentralizing the issues management and the messaging so that if the shine was off the PM, the team branding would already be in place as a countervailing factor.”**

The default position in crisis, developed during the 2015 campaign, was that if you let Trudeau “sell” the merchandise in the store no one’s buying, his charisma would win out. More damaging than this approach moreover, if there is anything about the SNC-Lavalin issue that does still resonate, it is the impression of how little agency cabinet members had in the face of a phalanx of unelected advisors to the prime minister steering the course of action and keeping Trudeau himself looking like a remote but complicit figure

throughout the worst of it. Though Trudeau has taken the hit through this steady decline in his approval numbers, this has really been about how Trudeau’s team has governed, not what they can say they’ve delivered for Canadians. The worst traits of this government, much like the best—its innovative and thoughtful policy making—were forged in the blast furnace of an election campaign, yet every campaign is unfortunately very different, and the alchemy that created one majority victory can rarely guarantee even an eked out minority victory the next time around.

If the Trudeau government only lasts as long as one mandate, the question of how the brand and issues have been managed will have proven to be their undoing. It will have been less those “events, dear boy” that took up so much oxygen in question period, or in the negotiations in Washington or First Ministers’ meetings. And even if the Liberals win another mandate, a minority government should be viewed as a defeat, if not a reckoning, for the decision-making that diminished such a powerful reserve of political capital. **P**

*John Delacourt, Vice President and Group Leader for Hill and Knowlton’s public affairs practice in Ottawa, is a former director of communications for the Liberal Research Bureau and the author of three books.*



Andrew Scheer flipping pancakes at the Cenovus Energy Stampede breakfast in Calgary in July 2019. Just an ordinary guy. Flickr photo

## The Scheer Strength: Relatability

*Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer heads into this election without the baggage of his predecessor, Stephen Harper. As longtime Conservative strategist Yaroslav Baran points out, he's not likely to win a charisma contest against Justin Trudeau but he can claim the mantle of Canada's soccer dad at a time when context could make it an exploitable advantage.*

### Yaroslav Baran

Parties don't win elections—governments lose elections. The assumption in Canada's political culture is that change does not come about from some grand new vision that captures the public imagination, but from a collective sense—sometimes sooner and sometimes later—that it's time to “throw the bums out.”

Yes, there are things Opposition parties can do to hasten a government's demise: good “opposition research” or “oppo”, clever issue positioning, or skillful illumination of the incumbent's flaws of competence or ethics.

When that happens, the logical alternative gets a turn. Historically and



with few exceptions, it has been the Liberals and Conservatives alternating occupancy of the roles of prime minister and leader of the Opposition. This pattern—and current polls—suggest the prime minister-ship is Andrew Scheer’s for the taking, sooner or later. The chief threat for Opposition leaders, whoever they may be, is that their own party members grow impatient with their leader more quickly than the public grows weary with the incumbent. Meanwhile, they don’t have to do much other than remain inoffensive, waiting in the wings, ready to take over when it’s their turn.

So what does Andrew Scheer need to do? What is the key to capitalizing on current polls, which suggest the public is almost as tired of Justin Trudeau after four years as it was of Stephen Harper after nine? A number of regional dynamics in vote-rich areas present opportunities, but also some delicate challenges, for Scheer. Atlantic Canada, British Columbia, Quebec, and Ontario all have many seats up for grabs if we believe the latest polling.

In Newfoundland, the government’s unfriendliness to oil and gas—the sector that turned the province’s economy around—should be a Liberal liability. A gentle, friendly, non-confrontational nudge should be all that’s required to tilt the vote blue. In the Maritimes and in Labrador, the biggest challenge for Scheer is to demonstrate that he understands the East—that he isn’t a continuation of the Reform Party genes that evaluate Canada through a Prairie-centric lens. For an Ottawa native representing a Saskatchewan riding, that will mean strong candidates, household name candidates, frequent visits, and a demonstrated understanding of the vernacular of regional issues: cod, crab, quota, shipbuilding, tourism, energy, and a grasp of the principle of reciprocity: you have my back, I’ll have yours.

British Columbia has often been unpredictable electorally, but its volatility can be harnessed to a challenger’s

**“There are things Opposition parties can do to hasten a government’s demise: good ‘opposition research’ or ‘oppo’, clever issue positioning, or skillful illumination of the incumbent’s flaws of competence or ethics.”**

advantage. The ongoing saga of the Trans Mountain pipeline, if played right by all Opposition parties, should have a centrifugal effect on the electorate. For pipeline opponents, the script is that the Liberals are false environmentalists—they talk a good game, but then go and cut deals to build pipelines. For pipeline supporters, the script is just as simple: they promised a pipeline, and there’s no pipeline.

**“For pipeline opponents, the script is that the Liberals are false environmentalists—they talk a good game, but then go and cut deals to build pipelines. For pipeline supporters, the script is just as simple: they promised a pipeline, and there’s no pipeline.”**

It doesn’t have to be a brash, Alberta-first message; it just takes an unapologetic—yet respectful—message that an Andrew Scheer government believes in diversity when it comes to our energy sector. Yes, we will invest in renewables R&D. And, yes—we will also get Canada’s fossil fuels to market. Because nation-building shouldn’t be about winners and losers—it’s about mutual accommodation, forward thinking, wise investments, and respect.

Quebec is an equally challenging arena, with more parties and greater political complexity, but Scheer is on the

right path. His embrace of Big Milk is a good start, inoculating against a neo-conservative libertarian straw man as a threat to supply management. Other issues will be more challenging: the asylum seeker question is a balance beam, with political peril on each side. Many Quebecers are rightly displeased with the ongoing exploitation of a loophole that has upended our asylum system. Compassion coupled with orderly queues and due process is a legitimate position. In fact, it is politically unassailable. But if tempered with charged language or anything that smacks of distrusting foreigners, the Conservatives risk losing three votes in Ontario or B.C. for each voter they appease in Quebec. Scheer did an excellent job in articulating his Immigration policy through his five-part spring speech series. All the balances were struck. He needs to keep this balance—not only he, but all his candidates.

Current polling suggests the Conservatives have up to 20 seats open to them in Quebec. There is no reason they cannot and should not do even better. Scheer cannot turn himself into a Quebecer; and he is running against one. But the key to winning Quebec is remaining true to himself and not overthinking his strategy. In almost all regions outside downtown Montreal, Quebecers tend to be small-c conservatives in their values and outlook. Scheer embodies these values in a moderate and reasonable way. As they get to know him, a great many Quebecers will see their own reflection in him. That means exposure. Lots of it. And just being himself.

Ontario offers a similar challenge and opportunity. Again, Scheer needs only to be himself—the normal, “guy next door” soccer dad. The biggest

liability in Ontario is Premier Doug Ford. The premier has demonstrated that Ontario—even inner-Toronto—is accessible to the Tory brand, yet his polling is currently abysmal. The good news in this for Scheer is that the two men couldn't be more different. Ford is known for his brash style, impulsive decision-making, and oversimplification of public policy. Scheer, in contrast, is more reserved, thoughtful, and about as non-bombastic as they come, criticized often from within for being "too boring". Bring it. That is precisely what Ontarian voters are in the mood for.

This brings us to the principal threat Scheer faces: weathering an aggressive smear campaign designed to demonize him while his name recognition is still relatively low with the public. The themes are entirely predictable: xenophobia, Islamophobia, abortion, and climate change. The Liberal campaign will throw tremendous energy and advertising behind this effort. In fact, it has already started.

An unfortunate fact for Scheer is that he bears the legacy of damage that others before him did to the Conservative brand. This includes miscues and inept policy proposals from the 2015 Conservative campaign, such as the barbaric cultural practices snitch line that widely flopped as a veiled Islamophobic dog whistle. It also includes the legacy of the recent Tory leadership race, which resurfaced (albeit by Scheer's opponents) issues such as abortion and a Canadian values test. The sooner Scheer recognizes that this baggage is real, that he did not inherit the party throne with a clean slate, the better for his 2019 prospects.

**R**eal politics now demands that he overcorrect for these transgressions of others. In a recent speech, he signaled that he will have no tolerance for anyone running under his banner exhibiting intolerant views. He said he would show them the door. He will have to. In fact, he may have to expel several candidates over future eruptions to demonstrate he is serious. Is it fair

Scheer should be held to a higher bar? Maybe, maybe not. It doesn't matter. A failure to recognize reality could be politically deadly.

**“ You go be the sexy playboy, jet-setting with celebrities. That's fine. I'll be the barbecue dad next door, cargo jeans and hamburger flipper to boot. And let's have a discussion for 36 days about who gets the middle class—and those working hard to join it. ”**

The Conservative machine will also have to develop a sharper instinct for tone in sensitive circumstances. Scheer was criticized for having failed to mention Islamophobia following the Christchurch mass murder in New Zealand. His tweet was, in fact, almost identical to Governor General Julie Payette's, which also fell short of using the term. She, however, does not have to bear the legacy of Kellie Leitch, the 2015 Tory campaign, and other contributors to the Conservative Party's reputation on tolerance. Andrew Scheer does. And his team needs to understand this.

Conservative parties have rightly recognized a need to offer hope to communities, neighbourhoods and demographics left behind by a relocation of manufacturing or decline in resource development. Think Hamilton, Welland, Windsor, New Glasgow.... And often, such communities feel talked down to by well-meaning but disconnected Liberal elites. This is a political opportunity, but the challenge is to offer blueprints for economic and social revival, but to do so “credibly”, and without oversimplification, anti-intellectualism or tonal anti-elitism, and without resorting to disingenuous promises, protectionism or environmental regressiveness

that risk discrediting the party with other voters.

Then there is climate change. Carbon pricing will be a dominant election theme, with both the Liberals and Conservatives using it as a wedge. The Liberal script is already on display: an equation of their carbon tax with caring about climate change. And it's clever positioning. The Conservatives' response must be equally clever. They know that Canadians hate taxes—hence the anti-carbon tax message. The Conservatives must also, however, convince Canadians they care about climate change and are committed to fighting it. The winning message is an evolution of the one the Conservatives have already started: “There are two ways to address climate change. The Liberals have chosen a carbon tax that penalizes consumers—people like Sally who buys groceries and drives her kids to soccer and piano. That's a legitimate approach, and that's the Liberals' choice. We believe in the approach taken by people like Barack Obama and Stephen Harper—regulating emission caps on the actual emitters. We believe in going after the actual polluters.”

Scheer was elected speaker of the House of Commons by his peers. He was trusted by members of all political parties to preside over parliamentary proceedings with fairness and respect. These character traits are key to his personality, as attested by those who have known him a long time. He will not win a charisma war with Justin Trudeau. He also doesn't have to. His folksy and shy relatability could allow him to judo Trudeau's charisma and international star power against him: You go be the sexy playboy, jet-setting with celebrities. That's fine. I'll be the barbecue dad next door, cargo jeans and hamburger flipper to boot. And let's have a discussion for 36 days about who gets the middle class—and those working hard to join it. **P**

*Contributing Writer Yaroslav Baran, a partner at Earncliffe Strategy Group in Ottawa, is a Conservative advisor and strategist.*



# The NDP's Ballot Question

*In its post-Layton, post-Mulcair incarnation, the federal NDP has been feeling its way through something of an identity crisis. This has not been helped by the fact that many of its traditional electoral strengths have been absorbed by rival parties. Can Jagmeet Singh break the cycle by making the 2019 election about inequality?*

## Brian Topp

Going into the fall 2019 federal election campaign, it isn't too hard to come up with a list of things Jagmeet Singh's federal New Democrats can't do.

First, the federal New Democrats can't run to the right of the Liberals on fiscal and economic policy. The federal party's unwise decision to try this during the 2015 campaign federal made the New Democrats look like a party of continuity with Stephen Harper's austerity policies—quite an accomplishment for the NDP, but possibly not one they were looking for.

In Canada and around the democratic world, voters have had enough of Reagan-Thatcher austerity policies, and the consequent rise of a grotesque, unstable and unsustainable inequality. So nobody runs on those policies anymore. Not even Conservatives, who instead now cheerfully propose endless deficits in order to cut taxes for rich people. It is also true that mathematics haven't been abolished. There are limits to all things, including public borrowing. But that was not the focus of federal politics in 2015 and it probably won't be in 2019.

Jagmeet Singh's NDP has therefore repudiated Thomas Mulcair's core belief in politics—the former leader's view that any and all party principles and election commitments are contingent on balancing the federal bud-

get each and every year, come what may. That would not be Prime Minister Singh's view.

Second, the federal NDP likely can't successfully frame the election as being about who can best get rid of Justin Trudeau.

**“Framing the election as a crusade to rid Canada of Justin Trudeau would likely not work with New Democrat voters, precisely because they understand that the short road to doing this is to elect a Conservative government.”**

If Canadians really want to get rid of Justin Trudeau as their sole and top priority, the short road to doing so is to vote Conservative. There is a certain familiarity to federal politics in 2019. Trudeaumania has once again proved to be a one-shot phenomenon, as it was between 1968 and 1972. And so a first-term Trudeau government once again faces the challenge of giving Canadians a reason to vote for them other than celebrity excitement over the leader.

But framing the election as a crusade to rid Canada of Justin Trudeau would likely not work with New Democrat voters, precisely because they understand that the short road to doing this is to elect a Conservative government. In this era of Trump, Ford and Kenney (political characters that New Democrats view as interchangeable), that is the last thing NDP voters want to see. So making the election explicitly about getting rid of Trudeau, whatever it takes, would likely suppress the NDP vote and flip cross-pressured NDP/Liberal voters to vote Liberal, as they did in 2015.

Third, the federal NDP also probably can't successfully frame the election as being about who can stop Andrew Sheer and the Conservatives. The short road to stopping the populist rightwing haters is to re-elect the Liberals. So, if the most important issue facing Canada is to protect women, new Canadians, gay people and First Nations from Andrew Scheer and his dream team of strategists from Ezra Levant's hate site, Mr. Trudeau goes into the campaign in a better position to do so.

Fourth, the federal NDP probably can't turn the 2019 election into a referendum about climate change. This is an awkward topic for this writer to talk to you about, gentle reader, because Jagmeet Singh's NDP has decided to explicitly repudiate the policies of the Notley Alberta NDP government, which I had a hand in developing.

During her term, Premier Rachel Notley offered Canada a grand bargain whereby Alberta would: cap the expansion of emissions from the oil sands; implement a universal carbon price; and eliminate Alberta's heavy dependence on coal-fired electricity as

quickly as possible in favour of renewables—all steps that would slow and then begin to reduce Alberta's carbon emissions, which were growing uncontrollably. And which, without these policies, would have (and may again) made it absolutely impossible for Canada to meet its international carbon emission targets.

In return, Notley asked the rest of Canada to allow Alberta better access to an ocean port, so that Alberta could sell its more limited energy production into the world market for its full price. The Trudeau government took Notley up on this bargain, made it the core of a federal climate leadership plan centred on a federal carbon price, and invested in the Trans Mountain pipeline to meet its terms. However, for reasons of politics and principle that have an undeniable integrity to many of its urban voters in British Columbia, the British Columbia NDP of Premier John Horgan has mounted a determined and high-decibel campaign against all of this, and in favour of the status quo. And after a period of unhappy prevarication, the federal NDP has decided to follow this lead.

Mulcair was unpopular with Alberta New Democrats, who never forgave him for musing that Canada has “Dutch disease” because of the monetary and fiscal consequences of being an all-your-eggs-in-one-basket major energy exporter. This interesting piece of punditry did not go over well in Alberta. But to his very great credit, Mulcair attempted to walk a fine and balanced line between these contending western regions and NDP governments, mindful of the fundamental duty of federal leaders and parties to find themes that bring Canadians in different regions together instead of dividing them.

Here again, Jagmeet Singh's NDP has repudiated their former federal leader—and the Notley NDP. Indeed, in some of their statements about fracked natural gas and the infrastructure required to develop B.C.'s LNG industry, the Singh federal NDP is throwing the Horgan B.C. NDP government into the repudiation bin for good measure. In lieu of



Jagmeet Singh, positioning the NDP on its own ballot question for winning the campaign. Wayne Polk Flickr photo

Notley's grand bargain and Horgan's B.C.-first LNG plan, the federal NDP is going into the 2019 campaign with an uncompromising green agenda that repeats the views of the world's most committed and alarmed climate change campaigners.

Having done this, the Singh New Democrats almost certainly can't make it the core of their appeal. Because if they convince their own voters that climate change is the single most important thing that must be addressed now, quite a few of them might well vote for the Green Party. If the next election is about a single issue, there is a single-issue party available on this issue.

So, if the Singh NDP's campaign can't be about flanking the Liberals on the right on fiscal and economic issues; probably can't be about getting rid of Trudeau; can't be about stopping the populist right-wing haters; and can't only or principally be about flanking the Liberals on the left on climate change policy—what can it be about?

Going into the campaign, Jagmeet Singh and his team were getting ready to ask this: “The question in

this election is, why do Liberals and Conservatives keep making life easier for the rich—and harder for the rest of us?” This campaign frame gets us back to the painful lesson of 2015. Voters—certainly any voters willing to consider voting NDP under Jagmeet Singh—are looking for an alternative to austerity policies that favour the few and betray the many.

Most Canadian families can see themselves in that question. Most Canadian families live the experience of needing two or three incomes to make ends meet. Of creeping precarious employment, everywhere. And of everyone with a claim on their income—the mortgage bank or the landlord, the grocery store, the phone company and the gas company—getting regular raises at their expense. While most people haven't had a real raise themselves in a generation. While many have seen their jobs shipped overseas, with minimum wage work in retail beckoning as an alternative... maybe.

Trump spoke to working American families about these themes, and persuaded them he cared more about them than Hillary Clinton and the Democrats did. Other populists on the right are now following suit—and offering their solutions, which are about doubling down on the fiscal and economic policies that created all of this, while bashing your neighbour because she is from Syria.

Jagmeet Singh's NDP are hoping to make the election about these issues, too. The trick is going to be to get voters to ask themselves that question, without being distracted by the other questions discussed above. If Jagmeet Singh succeeds in doing this, he'll prove—not for the first time in recent federal political history—that the leader of the third party has been underestimated. **P**

*Brian Topp is a partner at KTG Public Affairs, a fellow at the Public Policy Forum, a director on the board of the Broadbent Institute, and is teaching a course at the Max Bell School of Public Policy at McGill University. He served as chief of staff to Alberta Premier Rachel Notley.*





Green Party Leader Elizabeth May. Her showing up for the job has made the Greens competitive in Campaign 2019. *Green Party of Canada photo*

## Mayday! M'aidez!

*In mid-August, The Hill Times ran a cartoon by Michael de Adder of Green Party Leader Elizabeth May with the thought bubble 'I must be doing something right'...her back covered with Post-It notes saying 'Kick me'. The image pricelessly captured May's pre-election moment as a longtime advocate mainstreamed by events, whose principle on one of the most urgent issues of our time has suddenly put her in the political crosshairs.*

**Ziya Tong**

**"H**alf the job is showing up," you've likely heard it said. And yet, in the political arena, it's stunning when this most *basic* of requirements is shrugged off. It's still harder to swallow when the issue at hand is a national emergency.

An emergency in any other context would signal, at minimum, the following: 1) An alarm, or repeated alarms to give notice to the public 2) An immediate mandate to respective agencies to initiate plans and procedures for an urgent response, and 3) Deployment and action of expert teams.

And yet nothing in present-day Canada even hints at the fact that we are

in the midst of an emergency. Instead, on June 17th, 2019—the day the House of Commons passed a motion declaring a national climate emergency—Justin Trudeau, Jagmeet Singh and Andrew Scheer were all at the Raptors parade in Toronto, cheering and smiling for the cameras rather than tackling the less glitzy job of public policy. More egregious though, is that the party leaders of the Liberals, NDP and Conservatives *did not even vote*. Only one federal leader was present at the debates that day to discuss the single, most pressing issue of our time. That leader was Elizabeth May.

This is not the only time May has shown up solo. Just one month later at the 40th annual general assembly of the Assembly of First Nations, again, May was the only federal leader present. Although high priority is placed on reconciliation and Indigenous relations in governing rhetoric, here, before an audience of a thousand people, those hollow words collapsed. Chiefs, insulted by the fact that the politicians did not have the time in their schedules to show up demanded, “Where is your leader?” Their disappointment and anger of course, was justified. After all, what is a nation-to-nation relationship based on “rights, respect, cooperation and partnership” when the leaders of the nation called Canada were not even there?

There is a good reason we are seeing Elizabeth May shine now. Much of it has to do with her unrelenting work ethic, which began when the “Green wave” was just a ripple. The activist, author, mother and former lawyer has also flourished beyond Ottawa’s circles by coming across as the “non-politician” politician. As the Green Party Leader for the past 13 years, she’s brandished a simple method of cutting through political BS: support science, be honest and have integrity. Importantly though, May is also fearless when it counts. She is a known cage-rattler in the House of Commons, with a record of speaking out in Parliament on unpopular topics—

**“May is also fearless when it counts. She is a known cage-rattler in the House of Commons, with a record of speaking out in Parliament on unpopular topics—which, in turn, has boosted her public image.”**

which, in turn, has boosted her public image.

But as all policy wonks know, effective leadership requires more than charisma. Our priority now as a country is to find a leader with a solid plan. At this critical juncture, we need someone who can make bold reparations for our nation’s historic injustices, while at the same time crafting a visionary and inclusive plan that will ensure a secure and sustainable future for all Canadians.

**“As I write these words, an unprecedented and massive meltdown—12.5 billion tons of ice—drained off Greenland’s ice sheet in a single day. We had not expected to see melt levels like these until 2070. Calling the situation serious is an understatement.”**

**A**nd, we do not have much time.

According to the United Nations latest IPCC report, which is based on the most reputable science available, we have 11 years left to avert catastrophic damage to our already fragile ecosystems, and a mere 17 months for global leaders to agree upon achievable targets leading up to COP 26 in 2020. As I write these words, an unprecedented and massive meltdown—12.5 billion tons of

ice—drained off Greenland’s ice sheet in a single day. We had not expected to see melt levels like these until 2070. Calling the situation serious is an understatement.

So how serious are the federal parties’ plans? To start, Prime Minister Trudeau has been invited to attend the UN Climate Summit on September 23, 2019 to support the *New Deal for Nature and People*. All eyes should be on Trudeau because this a critical opportunity for Canada to step up. The ticket to entry, according to UN Chief Antonio Guterres, is a concrete plan to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. Guterres stipulates that world leaders should come prepared with real strategies, and not just “beautiful speeches.” So the question is: will Trudeau show up? If he does, it will mean outlining a far bolder plan than what the Liberals have previously set forth. Given the current rate of emissions decline under the *Pan-Canadian Framework*, it’s been calculated that it would take one thousand years to reach Canada’s 2050 target. You read that correctly: *one thousand years*. When put into perspective it becomes clear that incrementalism of this kind is not climate leadership. It’s a death sentence.

As the Liberals like to point out however, at least they “have a plan with targets.” And here, they should be commended for the hard work of putting a price on carbon. In terms of greenhouse gas pollution, Andrew Scheer’s *Real Plan to Protect Our Environment* would haul the country backward. The plan itself has no emissions targets at all (To consider how absurd that is, try to imagine a CEO putting forward a business



plan with zero targets.) In practice, the Conservative plan would not only *increase* emissions and the margin by which we miss Canada's Paris targets, it would also be expensive, costing the average tax payer between \$187-\$295 *more* per household if the federal carbon tax household rebate and the home retrofit tax credits were repealed.

If the Conservatives have omitted emissions targets, it should be noted that Jagmeet Singh's *New Deal for Climate Action and Good Jobs* makes rather a curious omission as well. While the NDP's foundation for economic and social justice is strong (and critical for any climate plan to succeed), nowhere in their blueprint is there any mention of where the party stands on expanding oil and gas infrastructure. And yet, even the International Energy Agency (IEA)—an organization known for its institutional conservatism—revealed after conducting a thorough audit of “all current and under-construction energy infrastructure around the world” that 95 percent of all permitted emissions under the Paris targets have already been accounted for. That is, there is no room in the carbon budget for expanding fossil fuel infrastructure.

In conserving my own energy, I shall reserve only one sentence for Maxime Bernier's *People's Party* platform, which claims that we should not be duped by “climate alarmist nonsense,” and it is this: federal party leaders who do not take the science of climate change seriously should not be taken seriously at all.

**W**hich brings me to the one plan that comes equipped with robust targets, has a clear understanding of the science, and timeline that reflects the fact that we are in a climate emergency, and that is the Green Party of Canada's *Mission: Possible*.

The plan's thoroughness is a testament to the fact that it was not cobbled together in a single election cycle—it is based on solutions that Greens have been thinking about and

refining for the last thirty-six years.

Indeed, *Vision Green*, the foundational policy document behind the plan, is a 20-step climate action plan that prioritizes ecosystem restoration, new technologies and upgrades, infrastructure adaptation (which is critical, as any emergency planner is aware), and an immediate transition to green jobs.

**“As the physical heat rises, May's popularity is rising as well. Naturally, the bigger spotlight will lead to more scrutiny. The proof of her leadership in the months ahead will be in how well she responds to critics on the feasibility of her plans, and how she plans to pay for them.”**

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The Green Plan was co-authored by Elizabeth May in 2006. Along with *The Leap Manifesto*, *Vision Green* served as a blueprint for the now highly-publicized Green New Deal in the United States.

Policy-wise, the Greens have also benefitted from the expertise of belonging to a network of think tanks, institutes, NGOs, and 80 international member green parties called The Global Greens, a consortium that has grown in strength with the rising alarm triggered by the climate emergency. This united front was a big push behind the “Green Wave” that swept through the European Parliament in the spring of 2019, with 75 Green members elected as MEPs, and in the UK, where the Green Party won more seats than incumbent Conservatives. So in Canada, it is ironic that the Greens were not taken seriously until recently, because when it comes to the facts of

climate change, they have long been the most serious party of all.

Now, as the physical heat rises, May's popularity is rising as well. Naturally, the bigger spotlight will lead to more scrutiny. The proof of her leadership in the months ahead will be in how well she responds to critics on the feasibility of her plans, and how she plans to pay for them. There is no doubt that she has positively influenced the political climate, the question is: how will the political climate influence her?

Elizabeth May has a record of demonstrating the kind of courage and leadership that is needed right now: proposing what science says is critical, not what politics says is polling well. If she gains enough support within parliament to become a presence that cannot be ignored, I believe all Canadians will benefit, because she will raise the bar on any national climate agenda that is put forward.

Ultimately, the mark of a great leader is one who shows up, and steps up with bold action. As Canadians, we do not deserve a watered-down climate plan. As Canadians, we deserve an emergency plan that will save us.

*Ziya Tong is an award-winning science broadcaster and author. She currently serves as the Vice-Chair of WWF Canada.*

# Protecting Elections in a New Threat Environment

*The myriad innovations introduced by the fourth industrial revolution have, in the hands of malicious actors, been repurposed as weapons against democracy. Minister of Democratic Institutions Karina Gould outlines the government of Canada's comprehensive, pre-emptive response to those threats ahead of the federal 2019 election.*

## Karina Gould

When Canadians step into voting booths this October, they will be fulfilling a foundational principle of our democracy: the belief that citizens choose who will govern them. The trajectory of our democratic history has been to give life to this principle whether it be through establishing ourselves as an independent nation responsible for our own affairs, or through expanding suffrage to a greater and greater proportion of our citizens. While Canadians can rightly be proud of the progress that has been achieved, we must be careful not to allow complacency to set in.

Since Canada's last federal election, we have witnessed malicious foreign powers attempt to disrupt the electoral narratives of the United States, United Kingdom, France, Ukraine and the European Union, with varying degrees of success. It has become clear that malign foreign powers see elections as a way to sow discord and division in democratic societies and to advance their own objectives. We have seen malign actors employ a wide and evolving range of tactics, including by spreading disinformation, suppressing the vote, stealing private information, and encouraging conflict over controversial is-

ssues—all with the aim of interfering with the ability of citizens to choose who will govern them.

As Canadians, we can expect to be targeted with many of the same tactics we have seen deployed in other democracies around the world. This was confirmed by the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) in its *Cyber Threats to Canada's Democratic Process* report, which was the first publicly shared threat assessment of its kind in Canada and the world. In the update CSE issued earlier this year, they concluded that it is "very likely" Canadian voters will encounter foreign cyber interference in the months before the election. This should not be a surprise to anyone. We are a member of the G7, NATO, and the Five Eyes. We are a powerful voice for democratic values and human rights globally and have been active in supporting the rules-based international order—all of which contributes to making us a target.

As a government, we have a duty to protect the rights of Canadians to participate fully in our democracy: to vote, to express themselves, to assemble. As Minister of Democratic Institutions, protecting these precious rights is my primary focus.

That is why, on January 30, 2019, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the Minister of National Defence, and I announced Canada's Plan to Safeguard the 2019 General Election. This plan is built around four main pillars: expecting social media platforms to act, combatting foreign interference, improving organizational readiness, and enhancing citizen preparedness.

In elections around the world, we have seen social media used to spread disinformation, distort the debate, and create confusion, all of which can disengage people from the democratic process. That is why we expect social media platforms to take concrete actions to help safeguard the integrity of the next federal election. Our government developed the Canada Declaration on Electoral Integrity, which lays out how we can promote authenticity, integrity, and transparency online. We welcome companies like Facebook, Twitter, Google and Microsoft supporting the Declaration, and committing to increasing their efforts to protect Canada's electoral process from threats.

Our government also became the first in the world to regulate advertising on social media. Canada's electoral law now requires online platforms to maintain a registry of published partisan ads run by eligible parties, registered associations, nomination contenders and candidates, as well as by third party groups. This registry must have a copy of the ad, and the name of the individual who authorized it. This will enable Canadians to see who is advertising to them, and to think critically about what they are seeing. Canada is the first country in the world to legally require such a registry.





The Elections Modernization Act, which passed in December 2018, ensures that all Canadians are able to vote. Furthermore, it made important changes to our political financing laws to ensure Canadian voices are the ones we hear during and in the lead-up to our election.

We have also tasked our national security organizations to combat attempts to interfere in our electoral process. We established the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security that serves as the focal point for Canada's cybersecurity expertise. The Centre also houses the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force (SITE) which brings together the expertise of CSE, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Global Affairs Canada. Together, the SITE Task Force is working to combat underground activity from interfering with our electoral process in Canada.

**I**t is critical that democracies around the world work together to combat this common threat. To help facilitate information sharing, our government took the lead in establishing the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) at the G7 Summit in Charlevoix. The RRM, which is permanently housed in Canada, is working to identify, prevent and respond to threats to G7 members by analyzing threat patterns and trends; sharing information between partners; and iden-

tifying opportunities for coordinated responses when attacks do occur.

**“ While we have made significant preparations, the possibility of foreign cyber interference remains. In the event of that happening, we want to be sure that Canadians know where to get information, and that they can trust the impartiality of the message. ”**

While we have made significant preparations, the possibility of foreign cyber interference remains. In the event of that happening, we want to be sure that Canadians know where to get information, and that they can trust the impartiality of the message. That is why we established the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol (the Protocol) to do just that—keep Canadians informed. The Protocol would only be triggered in exceptional circumstances in cases where Canadians' ability to have a free and fair election is undermined. In these cases, a panel made up of five senior, impartial public servants would inform Canadians about what happened through a public statement. This will enable Canadians to make informed

choices during the election period, and ultimately, that is the goal.

The evidence is clear: the best defense against foreign threats to our democracy is an informed and engaged citizenry. That is why we have also taken steps to give Canadians the tools they need to be critical information consumers and recognize the behaviour of malicious actors. Through the newly created Digital Citizen Initiative, our government has committed \$7 million to help existing civil society organizations provide digital and civic literacy programming in the lead-up to this fall's election. The threat to our democracy will not go away after the election. In April 2019, we launched the Digital Democracy Project with an investment of \$19.4 million over 4 years. This project will support research and policy development on combatting disinformation in the Canadian context and lead an international initiative on responding to this problem.

Between now and October, there will undoubtedly be a robust—and at times rambunctious—debate over what the future of our country should look like. This is not only expected but welcome in a vibrant democracy. There will be serious differences in outlook, and Canadians will need to choose which vision most closely aligns with their own. In making that choice, they will fulfill that essential promise of our democracy that the governed get to choose the governing. However, Canadians will do so in an information ecosystem that has undergone significant change, even since the last general election. It is now more important than ever to inform ourselves about the challenges facing our country, and to think critically about the information that we see—especially online. An informed and engaged citizenry is the best defense against the malicious foreign actors that would seek to interfere in our democracy. Our government will continue to work hard to empower Canadians and protect our democratic institutions. **P**

*Karina Gould is Minister of Democratic Institutions and Member of Parliament for Burlington*



Justin Trudeau arrives on Parliament Hill across from his office on Canada Day, 2019. Patrick Gossage wonders whether Trump-style populism can occur in Canada. Adam Scotti Photo

## Could it Happen Here?

*Despite occasional flare-ups of something possibly resembling a Canadian iteration of Trumpism, the divisive, bellicose brand of overt racism and xenophobia politicized by the populist American president has not yet jumped the border. Veteran Liberal strategist Patrick Gossage weighs the chances that populism will play into the 2019 campaign.*

### Patrick Gossage

The last months of pre-election silliness have seen pundits and pollsters falling all over each other to try and show us that Canada is not immune to the anti-immigrant populism which has become so ugly south of the border, most recently with Donald Trump's racist rants against four congresswomen of colour, telling them to "go back" where they came from.

This apparent jeopardy was accentuated when the federal government added two right-wing Canadian extremist groups, Blood and Honour and Combat 18, to its list of banned terrorist organizations. Add to this the



Quebec government's passage of Bill 21 banning public service employees from wearing religious symbols—including the Hijab, with its anti-Islamic discriminatory overtones.

Are we immune to populist trends gripping the Western world or not? And how will backroom strategists planning election messaging use media-stoked anxieties that we are on a slippery slope?

Frank Graves of Ekos Research fired off the most recent evidence of growing Canadian populism in late July. Graves argues that economic stagnation, the hyper concentration of wealth, and a brewing cultural backlash mean Canada's political climate is ripe for populist forces to gain traction here. He posits the growth in the Conservatives' attraction to the less educated as a potential reason for them to become more populist. There is also an exploitable widening gap between the attitudes that left- and right-leaning voters share towards issues such as immigration and climate change.

But his position has prompted other pollsters to disagree. Doug Anderson of Earncliffe Strategy Group says his research has also shown conditions are there for "people to rally behind a populist candidate," but none of the federal party leaders embody that mold. "There has to be a candidate who is seen as a champion for them, the antithesis of what they're getting," he said. "[It's someone] who compellingly says, 'I feel why your government serves the elite.'" He dismissed right wing People's Party (PPC) head Maxime Bernier's almost futile attempts to rally that minority.

Nevertheless, Liberal strategists have undoubtedly noted this with interest and may be tempted to position Justin Trudeau as the saviour of Canada from "creeping populism".

There is good research that shows how divergent attitudes to immigration could play out in the election. An Environ-

**“Are we immune to populist trends gripping the Western world or not? And how will back room strategists planning election messaging use media stoked anxieties that we are on a slippery slope?”**

ics poll last November gave strategists something to chew on. Just 22 per cent of Liberals and 24 per cent of New Democrats thought Canada takes in too many immigrants. But 52 per cent of Conservatives and 47 per cent of PPC supporters thought so. And 73 per cent of PPC voters and 70 per cent of Conservatives think too many immigrants are failing to adopt "Canadian values," compared to 38 per cent of Liberals and 40 per cent of New Democrats.

Certainly, Liberals are accustomed to the frequent rants of Conservative immigration critic Michelle Rempel, who while careful not to sound anti-immigrant, forcefully disputes Liberals' handling of the influx of "illegal" immigrants walking into Canada at the Quebec border. She likes to cite an Angus Reid poll from August 2018 showing 49 per cent of respondents felt there should be fewer immigrants allowed into Canada. That figure was 36 per cent in 2014.

This tendency for Conservatives to question asylum seekers and a very generous approach to immigration will be fodder for Liberal election strategists, and Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer must keep his troops from unfortunate anti-immigrant outbursts which would be fully exploited by the Liberals. It will remain a stretch, however, for Liberals to depict Conservatives as anti-immigrant.

Scheer might consider that there are solid non-racist arguments to be made against increasing immigration levels—a view held by many in his base. A recent *New York Times* opinion piece by David Leonhardt quotes labour historian Irving Bernstein: "Immigration restriction, by making unskilled labour scarcer,

tends to shore up wage rates." In addition, Leonhardt makes the point that the period of strongest income gains for middle class and poor families in the U.S. followed and overlapped with a period of falling immigration.

Every campaign needs to show its leader and policies superior in every way to its opponents. Trudeau consistently insists that he opposes the tactics of fear and division, and he knows he will benefit from the widespread dislike of the only populist government in Canada, that of Doug Ford in Ontario. Ford's refrain "for the people" against elites is pure populism. Liberal canvassers in Ontario are hearing lots of anti-Ford sentiment at the door.

Recent patronage scandals brought on by Ford's former chief of staff, Dean French, and a series of damaging cuts to education and other services, have seriously tanked Ford's approval to the point that it is now generally agreed that Scheer's popularity in Ontario has suffered as well and that he will steer well clear of Ford in the election.

Anti-populist sentiment could well become a permanent part of the Liberal pitch. Will Trudeau position himself as the bulwark against the threat of authoritarianism, Trump-style populism and anti-immigrant xenophobia invading our peaceful land? It's tempting, to be sure, particularly given how his stump speech is built. On the other hand, will Scheer and Rempel turn up the volume on Trudeau's missteps in immigration and asylum seeker policymaking? Likely, but with great care.





President Donald Trump at a rally in Charlotte, N.C. Charlotte Cuthbertson/The Epoch Times Photo

Racism and xenophobia are powerful moral issues and there is little doubt that racism remains a problem in Canada—most notably in highly publicized cases in several police forces. Racism against Indigenous people is a huge problem, too. Trump's telling the four Democratic congresswomen of the progressive "Squad" to go back where they came from provoked a flood of social and other media from Canadians sharing similar stories. "We can do better" however, sounds very much like the 2015 Trudeau.

It could be argued that a form of populism has already taken root in Canada. That is the idea of a pure people being exploited by a corrupt elite. What *Washington Post* columnist George Will has called "curdled envy and resentment." This is certainly evident in attitudes in Western Canada, particularly Alberta and Saskatchewan, against the Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal elites.

As Andrew Potter from McGill Uni-

**“Trudeau consistently insists that he opposes the tactics of fear and division, and he knows he will benefit from the widespread dislike of the only populist government in Canada, that of Doug Ford in Ontario.”**

versity has argued in the *Globe and Mail*: "This is populism of a highly regionalist sort... the worrying over whether the right-wing populists will take power in Canada misses the fact they already have. They've merely taken to the provincial level of politics to air their grievances and accomplish their goals." Could this be countered by the Liberals in a strongly worded national unity pitch? We will see. The Conser-

vatives will certainly use Trudeau's fight with provincial premiers over the carbon tax in their attacks on the government.

All in all, despite the attention being given to populism and authoritarianism from Hungary to Britain and Brexit to Trump's America, it is difficult to argue that Canada, with its entrenched multicultural multiracial communities, will yield to these trends, or that the fear of populism will be a decisive factor in the next election. **P**

*Patrick Gossage, press secretary to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau from 1976-82, is the author of Close to the Charisma: My Years between the Media and Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and founding chair of Media Profile, a Toronto media consulting and PR firm.*

# The 'Big E' Election— Energy and the Environment

*In a country that remains a major oil producing nation and whose energy policy landscape includes political, regional, jurisdictional and Indigenous rights considerations, the term “pipeline politics” doesn’t begin to cover the complexity of the issue. In an election year, things get more interesting.*

## Don Newman

This year’s federal election should be the “Big E” election. The E stands for both energy and environment, and in political terms, how they interconnect in a country and for a government that has to balance the interests of a powerful energy industry, a tradition of passionate environmental advocacy and the sustainability of the planet.

That dynamic is the biggest issue facing the country, an issue of national unity, of economic development, of employment, of this country’s environment and Canada’s international commitments.

The Trudeau government’s approach to reconciling the immediate interests of the oil industry and its 300,000 workers, the environmental necessity to transition to clean energy and the urgency of fighting climate change has been a combination of environmental activism and pipeline development. This seemingly contradictory policy juggle mirrors similar tacks by other governments, including, pre-Trump, Barack Obama’s “all of the above” approach that both supported fracking toward energy independence and increased solar power production by 2003 per cent, among other outcomes. The dif-

ficulty of the approach is that relies heavily on communications that effectively explain the overlap to the general public because neither the energy industry nor environmental activists will be completely or consistently satisfied.

In Canada, that balancing act is complicated by issues of government finance, federal and provincial political and jurisdictional tensions, and the debate over taxes on individuals and corporations. When it came to power four years ago, Justin Trudeau’s Liberal government had an energy and environment plan it thought would cover all the bases. It would support and encourage the twinning of the Trans Mountain pipeline, which carries Alberta oil sands oil to a tanker terminal in Vancouver harbour. It would also seek to limit Canada’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and work towards meeting Canada’s climate change commitments.

That was to be achieved by having the provinces put a price on carbon; either by a direct tax or through a cap-and-trade system of sharing carbon credits. Provinces that refused to go along would have the federal government impose its own carbon tax in those recalcitrant jurisdictions, scaling up to \$50 dollars per tonne by 2022. The money collected by the

federal tax would then be rebated to the province in which it was collected—not to the provincial government, but to individual taxpayers.

Winning the pipeline would almost triple its capacity to 900,000 barrels per day, opening the potential for oil exports to Asia, particularly, it is hoped, to China. But environmental organizations and some Indigenous leaders have decried the proposed expansion of Trans Mountain, and they have repeatedly fought and delayed its construction in court.

Things became so bad for the Trans Mountain expansion plan that in the spring of 2018, its American owner, Kinder Morgan, said it was dropping the proposal. To save the project, the federal government bought the existing pipeline and the expansion proposal from Kinder Morgan, for \$4.7 billion.

But that didn’t improve the expansion’s chances. Three months later, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled Ottawa had not sufficiently consulted with Indigenous groups, or taken into account possible adverse effects on maritime populations in the waters off Vancouver from a dramatic increase in tanker traffic.

Earlier this summer, almost a year after the court ruling, the federal government said both of those issues had been addressed, and the pipeline expansion was approved for a second time. But some environmental and Indigenous groups are already threatening new court challenges. They will join the government of British Columbia, which is already in court trying to stop the twinning of Trans





A tanker arriving at Westridge Marine Terminal in Burrard Inlet, Burnaby, BC. *Trans Mountain Pipeline Corporation photo*

Mountain, and a start date for the new pipeline remains in doubt.

Moreover, in the four years since the pipeline/carbon tax plan was devised by the Trudeau government, a lot of things have changed. Provincial elections in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick have replaced governments sympathetic to Ottawa's pipeline for carbon tax proposal with Conservative governments that support the pipeline expansion, but have been scrapping carbon reduction programs and challenging Ottawa's constitutional right in court—so far unsuccessfully—to impose a carbon tax.

On the winning side so far, the federal government is preparing to impose its carbon tax in the recalcitrant Conservative provinces. But the federal Conservatives have opposed the carbon tax from the beginning, claiming that it is just another tax that will not reduce carbon emissions. And if they win the October election, the federal carbon tax will disappear.

This past spring, Conservative leader Andrew Scheer revealed his own energy and environment plan. It would have no carbon tax *per se*, but would force large commercial emitters to pay into a fund,

which would then be used in the development of green technologies.

The Conservatives support the Trans Mountain expansion but they want to go a lot farther. They want to develop “resource corridors” across Canada. These would be dedicated rights of way negotiated across the country into which new pipelines, high voltage electricity transmission lines, and other ways of moving energy—perhaps even railways—would be routed. Such corridors are necessary, the Conservatives say, for Canada to be the “energy superpower” it must become.

**“As the campaign gets underway, the lines have been firmly drawn between the two parties who can actually win, on the ‘Big E’ election issue that will do more to shape Canada’s future than any other.”**

The negotiations over and potential court challenges to such an ambitious plan boggle the mind. But it does lay

out a proposal and a vision of an energy future that is much more reliant on pipeline development, without the carbon tax to help transition to an economy with fewer GHG emissions and less global warming.

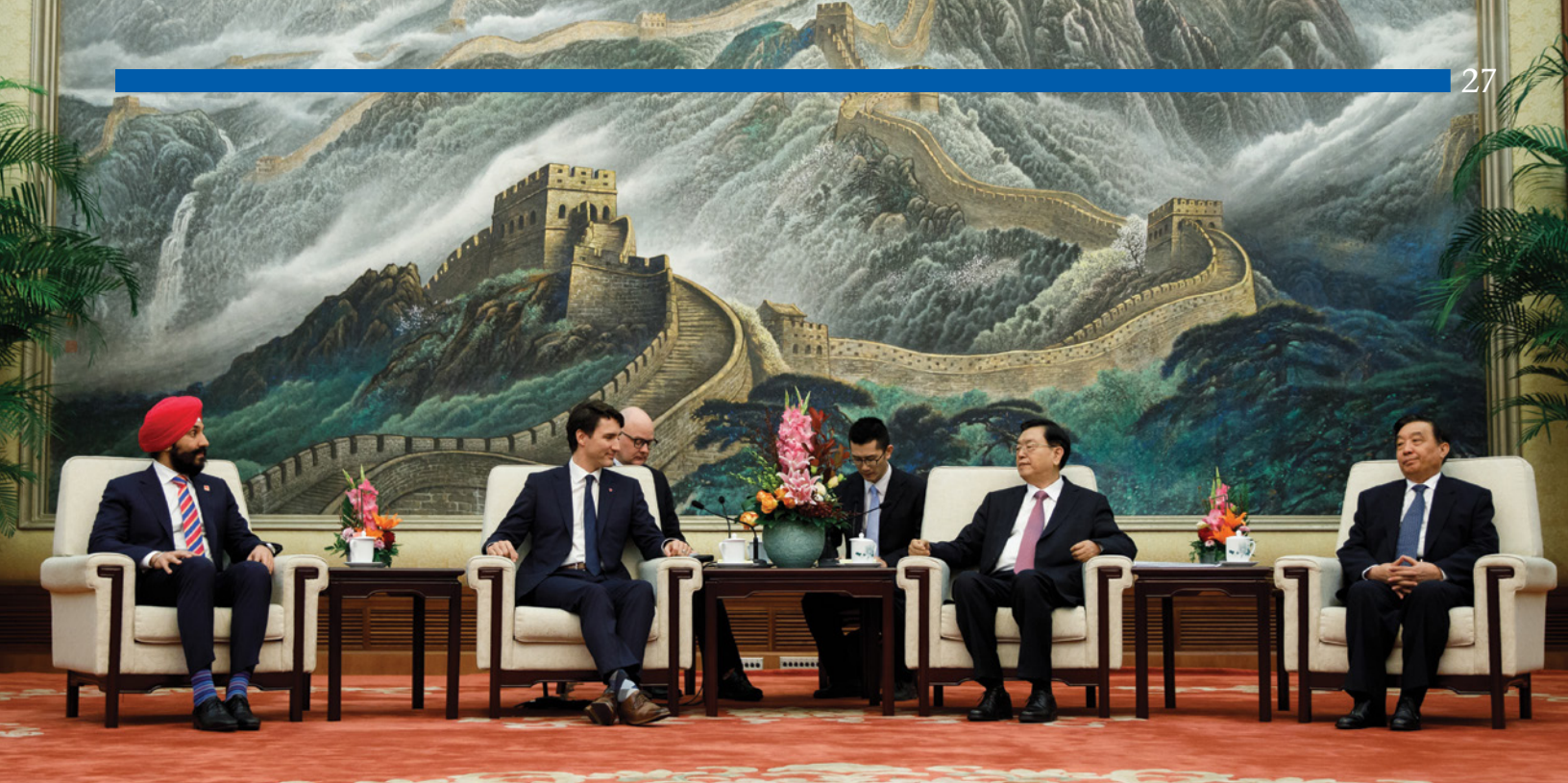
For its part, Elizabeth May's Green Party, the national branch of a global brand built on environmental and climate change activism whose positions have been mainstreamed over the past two decades, has labelled its 2019 energy policy *Mission: Possible*, a title widely seen as overly ambitious when it was published in May.

The next government will be formed by either the Liberal party or the Conservatives. The only chance the New Democrats or the Greens have to play any meaningful role is if Canadians elect a minority Parliament with one or both of the NDP and Greens holding the balance of power.

But as the campaign gets underway, the lines have been firmly drawn between the two parties who can actually win, on the “Big E” election issue that will do more to shape Canada's future than any other. **P**

*Policy columnist Don Newman is Senior Counsel at Navigator and Ensignt Canada and a Lifetime Member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery.*





Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, accompanied by Innovation Minister Navdeep Bains meets with Zhang Dejiang, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China. December 5, 2017. Adam Scotti photo

## Being Back: Foreign Policy as a Campaign Issue

*When Justin Trudeau summed up his foreign policy in 2015 with the message to the world that Canada was back, the world—including the players who didn't like it or didn't care—knew what he meant. Since then, he's been tweet-targeted by Donald Trump, sealed a major trade agreement with Europe and faces a crisis with China. Longtime senior diplomat Jeremy Kinsman looks at the politics of foreign policy four years later.*

**Jeremy Kinsman**

Foreign policy rarely figures as a driving issue in Canadian elections. But in 2019, Canada's place in the world and international stability itself are severely challenged, in large part because of the disruptive actions of the world's most powerful country—and historically our most important ally—next door. However, don't expect leaders to prioritize foreign policy in the campaign. (At this writing, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has not yet accepted an invitation for the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy debate scheduled for Oct. 1).

Campaigning tends to be about what strategists call pocketbook or kitchen-table issues and always leadership, but rarely geopolitics. The emphasis is on communications and

leaders' images, not substance. Trudeau won't get a free ride on foreign policy in the campaign but isn't under much pressure either.

Canadian political parties have basically shared a postwar internationalist consensus to support effective multilateral rules-based cooperation whenever possible. It's always been seen as an essential hedge against over-dependence on the United States, whose primordial importance to Canada is accepted, but whose influence and methods are not always benign. To the extent that issues of sovereignty and national identity have occasionally surged as electoral factors, it has almost always been to do with the U.S., pro or con.

In 1963, Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's opposition to accepting the basing of U.S. nuclear-tipped Bomarc anti-aircraft missiles on Canadian soil was a factor in the defeat of his minority Progressive Conservative government. In 1988, John Turner made Liberal opposition to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement the "fight of his life." The Liberals were outflanked by the Mulroney government's support for cultural industries, which neutralized the argument that our national identity was threatened by what was then the Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement.

Indirectly, the popularity or unpopularity in Canada of a U.S. president can lift or hurt prime ministers seeking re-election. Among the unpopular, Canadians loathed Richard Nixon, whose dislike of Pierre Trudeau was a political asset at home. Trudeau was also generally applauded for keeping Canada out of Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam War, as was Jean Chrétien over George W. Bush's war in Iraq. Personal compatibility worked electorally for prime ministers who were pals with presidents popular in Canada—Pierre Trudeau with Jimmy Carter, Chrétien with Bill Clinton. Canadian public opinion had, since 1980, been cool to Ronald Reagan's conservative and hawkish rhetoric, but by 1988 had warmed to the man himself and viewed his affection for Mulroney as a benefit to Canada.

**“Once in office, Trudeau affirmed strengthened bilateralism while also declaring he would ensure that ‘Canada’s back’ as a multilateral player. For Obama’s final year, it looked great.”**

But incompatibility with Barack Obama—who was wildly popular in Canada—worked against Stephen Harper's re-election in 2015. In his come-from-behind campaign, Trudeau was happy to celebrate Obama's like-minded liberal internationalism. Once in office, Trudeau affirmed strengthened bilateralism while also declaring he would ensure that "Canada's back" as a multilateral player. For Obama's final year, it looked great.

Unfortunately, Donald Trump's election in 2016 upended the assumptions on both counts. In Canada, Trump is the least popular U.S. president ever. No one running for national office here would dare support his style, apparent values, or the substance of his actions, and expect to win.

On the other hand, the temptation to run a populist Canadian campaign against Trump is dampened by the cautionary principle that Canadians still expect their own leader to be able to maintain a civil and fair transactional relationship with the powerful U.S. leader, which in effect exempts Canada from his impulsive vindictiveness. Once he got past the unprecedented irritant of Trump's tweeted insults after the Charlevoix G-7 (calling his Canadian host "weak and dishonest") the prime minister belatedly began to explicitly dissociate himself and Canadians from the president's offensive assertions (as opposed to saying it's "not my job to opine" on what the U.S. President says).

**O**n the overarching Canada-U.S. issue—the re-negotiation of NAFTA—Trudeau pushed back calmly on Trump's repeated lies. Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland led an outstanding negotiating and political outreach ef-

fort. The revised NAFTA agreement is more of a defensive save than the kind of groundbreaking win/win outcome that describes the far-reaching Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the EU. But in light of the magnitude of Canadian economic stakes with the U.S., it was essential to close a deal, however modest. Because Democrats are so anxious to find arguments against Trump, it may not win congressional approval, but it at least won't be an electoral vulnerability for Trudeau.

Still, it is now commonplace to assert that the world is today a meaner and more dangerous place. Trump's "America first" approach to foreign relations, his disdain for both multilateral cooperation and America's affinity for customary democratic allies have been globally disruptive and run against Canadian values and international interests.

Does this open a perception of difference between Trudeau and Andrew Scheer, whose Conservative base is more receptive to the Washington security community's call for traditional U.S. allies to get into line? For some, the world's current disruption and danger argue Canada should indeed be sure that America "has our back."

In light of Trump's caprice and mendacity in his approach to Canada since 2016, and given that he is the cause of much of the global disruption, the notion of giving the U.S. our back seems to most Canadians to be somewhere between darkly hilarious and suicidal.

The Liberals will instead pump for their dual approach of strengthening the rules-based international order, including the World Trade Organization (WTO) and its role arbitrating trade disputes and contesting unilateral



protectionism à la Trump, (and where Canada is doing very useful reform work), while staying civil enough with the White House to minimize further disruption across our own border.

How will the campaign confront the overriding question of our era—the rivalry between a receding, more inward and defensive, U.S., and a risen, expansionist China? Though the U.S. may be suspected of trying to contain China's challenge to U.S. supremacy, there is a U.S. political consensus that over twenty years China abused the rules on trade and intellectual property on its way to its current swagger. Trump launched a trade war with China, via unilateral tariff hikes, that widened to a technology war and even a currency war. Former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers terms Trump's demands of China more of a "shopping list" of U.S. goods from key 2020 states than serious trade policy, amounting to politically-motivated protectionism. The negative implications for the U.S. economy, which will take a big hit from rising costs, have diminished market confidence around the world, slowed global growth, and even threatened a recession.

Given that the U.S. and China are Canada's top two trading partners, and that the fraught situation exposes Canadian interests to unintended negative consequences, you would think the trilateral dynamic would be debated in this election campaign.

But Canada has its own crisis with China, triggered by the December arrest at Vancouver airport of Huawei Executive Meng Wanzhou, on behalf of U.S. authorities who seek her extradition to stand trial for fraud charges of encouraging evasion of U.S. sanctions on Iran.

China swiftly retaliated for what they consider a hostile act in support of U.S. antagonism to Huawei by arresting two Canadians in China, creating a hostage situation. U.S. authorities seem indisposed to dropping the extradition request. China upped the ante by closing imports of Canadian canola, beef, and pork.

In the event, Canadian judicial au-

thorities may indeed find that under the terms of the bilateral treaty that Meng Wanzhou did not commit what would be a crime in Canada subject to a year's imprisonment and release her, enabling a solution. But this is unlikely to emerge before the election.

In the meantime, the hostage situation looms over the campaign. Whatever one thinks of the handling by the government of the initial U.S. request, the over-the-top Chinese reprisals have hardened Canadian political and public opinion, and discouraged debate in public. Conservatives deride clumsily triangulated comments from the former ambassador to China that Trudeau hired and fired, John McCallum, that the Tories will be tougher on Beijing if elected, and indeed call on the government to renounce their "naive" wish over the years for a Canada-China partnership. The Liberals will counter that Canada must succeed economically in China, but will not bend before an authoritarian regime that is increasingly under negative international scrutiny and pressure over protests in Hong Kong and brutal repression of its Uighur minority.

On the broader issue of the government's international relations, Scheer did give a June speech calling them "disastrous," citing various episodes in which image prevailed over substance with embarrassing consequences—the dress-up jaunt to India, lecturing the Chinese on the role of women, ego-stiffing our partners at the TPP Summit, the Charlevoix G-7 fiasco, but Trudeau has handled himself better recently.

Freeland has been a voice of some significance whose global network from her tenure as a senior editor at both the *Financial Times* and *Thomson-Reuters* has served her well. To the extent the U.S. and China files and defence of multilateralism enable her to do anything else, she has been brave on human rights, especially on Saudi Arabia's strong-arming of dissident women. Some business-oriented Conservatives (and others) seethe about the commercial costs, but after the regime's murder of Washington

*Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi, it's a political non-starter. Freeland's leadership on the Venezuela issue is also positive, even if concerted pressure on the Maduro government isn't having much effect. A deepening of the Hong Kong crisis and its impact on the 300,000 Canadians there would test human rights commitments.

Trudeau and especially Freeland have been discussing with democratic partners the creation of an informal coalition to defend and reform multilateralism and inclusive democracy. The necessity to strengthen the rules-based international order is a message Trudeau understands and communicates effectively. If our purpose is to be seen as "a useful country," he serves it well enough (though very probably not enough to enable us to edge out impressively useful Ireland and Norway for a UN Security Council seat in 2020).

Trudeau's democratic peers abroad are all worried about a backlash over immigration. Canada's positive integration experience is one they welcome referring to, though he has to avoid sounding preachy to countries whose geography is more challenging than Canada's from a migration standpoint.

Trudeau hasn't become the leader of the democratic world but he is welcomed as a like-minded partner of confidence by international peers including Angela Merkel, Emmanuel Macron, Jacinda Ardern and others. They like him; he has influence.

Trudeau has the advantage of experience in the job and a record on the big files of defending Canadian values as well as interests. At a time when Trump's behaviour has crystallized those values in the minds of voters, that's probably good enough for most Canadians at least as far as foreign policy is concerned. **P**

*Policy Magazine contributing writer Jeremy Kinsman is a former Canadian ambassador to Russia, the UK and the EU. He is affiliated with University of California, Berkeley, and is a distinguished fellow of the Canadian International Council.*



# Is Fiscal Responsibility an Issue in the 2019 Campaign?

*It isn't often that a fiscal policy announcement upends the trajectory of an election campaign narrative, but that's what Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau's pledge on deficit spending did in 2015. In four federal budgets since then, Finance Minister Bill Morneau has displayed none of the previous government's fixation on balanced budgets and the results have been generally positive, writes former Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page.*

## Kevin Page

With the federal election underway, it's safe to say all parties are busy costing their campaign promises, and those of their opponents, too. This tradition is strengthened this year as the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) has been given resources to help parties cost individual measures. When we add up all the individual measures costed by the PBO, how will political parties plan to pay the bill—will they raise taxes or increase the public debt?

Will fiscal responsibility be front and centre in the election? Have modest budgetary deficits become the new normal? Is it time for a reset of fiscal policy?

If we wind the clock back to the 2015 campaign, a case can be made that fiscal policy played a role in the debate and maybe the election outcome. As you may recall, the Conservative government's fiscal strategy was a balanced budget approach largely laid out in Budget 2015. At the time, many observers argued that given the weakness in the economy—year over year growth in real gross domestic product (GDP) fell to zero—this fiscal strategy likely hurt economic growth, at least in the short run. Going into the cam-

paign, the NDP, then the Official Opposition, had argued for a balanced budget over the medium term, but proposed tax increases for the corporate sector to help finance expansion of social programs. While a case could be made that what the NDP proposed was responsible (sometimes referred to by policy wonks as a balanced budget multiplier as taught by the late Paul Samuelson), some observers were surprised that the NDP would recommend a balanced budget track like the Conservatives, given the weakness in the economy.

In a move that shook up the campaign, the Liberals, the third party at the time, made the case for deficit-financed spending on a range of public policy issues including infrastructure and child benefit programs. This approach stood out both politically for staking out the NDP's traditional terrain on the left and leveraging the Conservatives' fiscal immobility on the right and policy-wise at a time when austerity had acquired quite a bad name elsewhere in the world. It was an approach that had the support of the International Monetary Fund as well as some leading economic thinkers of our time including former Bank of Canada governor David Dodge in Canada and former Trea-

sury Secretary Larry Summers in the United States. Given the low interest rates, why not borrow money to address public policy shortfalls including a perceived infrastructure deficit? The Liberal strategy was widely considered to have played a part in the party's decisive majority.

Credibility of fiscal plans depends on a number of factors. The economic environment—fiscal policy (like monetary policy) can have an important impact (positive or negative) on the growth of the economy. The fiscal balance sheet—the ability of governments to finance new proposals—will depend on fiscal room to maneuver linked to a number of factors, including the budgetary balance, size of debt, and the carrying cost of public debt interest.

Scott Clark—a past deputy minister of Finance in Canada—has made the case that the bottom lines of fiscal responsibility are about establishing and maintaining a sustainable medium-term (next five years) and longer-term fiscal framework. It involves developing a fiscal strategy and plan that allow governments to address public policy issues without creating imbalances that lead to unsustainable debt burdens that constrain the policy choices of future governments and generations.

By those measures, the case can be made that the fiscal policy of the Liberal government over the past four years has been responsible. It kept federal budgetary deficits to a relatively low percentage of GDP—less than one percentage point per year. In an environment of relatively low interest rates (i.e., the so-called negative interest and growth rate environment created following the 2008 financial crash whereby effective interest

rates are lower than the nominal GDP growth rate), this level of budgetary deficits is deemed sustainable over the medium term.

While the accumulative deficit increased by \$57 billion from 2014-15 to an estimated \$686 billion in 2018-19, as a percent of GDP this level of debt is relatively low by domestic and international standards and only modestly above recent historical lows established before the 2008 crisis. Notwithstanding the increase in public debt, the carrying cost of public debt interest (gross public debt interest charges as a percent of budgetary revenues) has actually fallen to historical lows because of the decline in effective interest rates (see Chart 1). Furthermore, and very importantly, analysis by Finance, PBO and the IMF suggests that the federal fiscal structure is sustainable over the long term in the face of aging demographics (by contrast, with the exception of Quebec, provincial governments are not fiscally sustainable).

Is it nonetheless possible to critique the Liberal government for shortfalls in fiscal policy?

Absolutely. In their 2015 election platform, the Liberals promised a balanced budget over the medium term. This target was within reach in 2018-19 as the economy strengthened in

2016 and 2017 and as revenues exceeded expectations on the backs of a strong labour market. They chose to spend the fiscal dividend. So, while the Liberals may have been responsible they were not accountable.

The current deficit is deemed to be structural in nature as calculated by the Department of Finance (2018 Fiscal Reference Tables). This raises the policy question, largely unanswered by the Liberals, of why run budgetary deficits when the economy is operating at a healthy trend? Do we need pro-cyclical fiscal policy to promote growth if the unemployment rate is at recent historic lows—below 6 per cent? While international organizations like the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have applauded Liberal government efforts to make policies more inclusive—increased spending on child benefits, Indigenous child welfare, public infrastructure—it is more of an open question as to whether this spending has been efficient and effective. Clearly, the project management and spending related to the disastrous pay system inherited from the Harper government—the Phoenix system is three times over budget with critical operational failures—was not responsible fiscal management.

The economic winds are now blowing in a different direction and the clouds

on the horizon are looking darker. The bond markets and a number of economic commentators (including Summers) are raising concerns about a possible recession over the short term. International organizations are calling for some moderation in global growth rates citing trade and growing uncertainty for business which will hurt investment due to U.S.—China trade tensions.

Getting fiscal policy right in the 2019 planning context means being prepared to navigate a potential economic shock over the next few years while aligning fiscal policy to long term policy objectives in a fiscally sustainable manner.

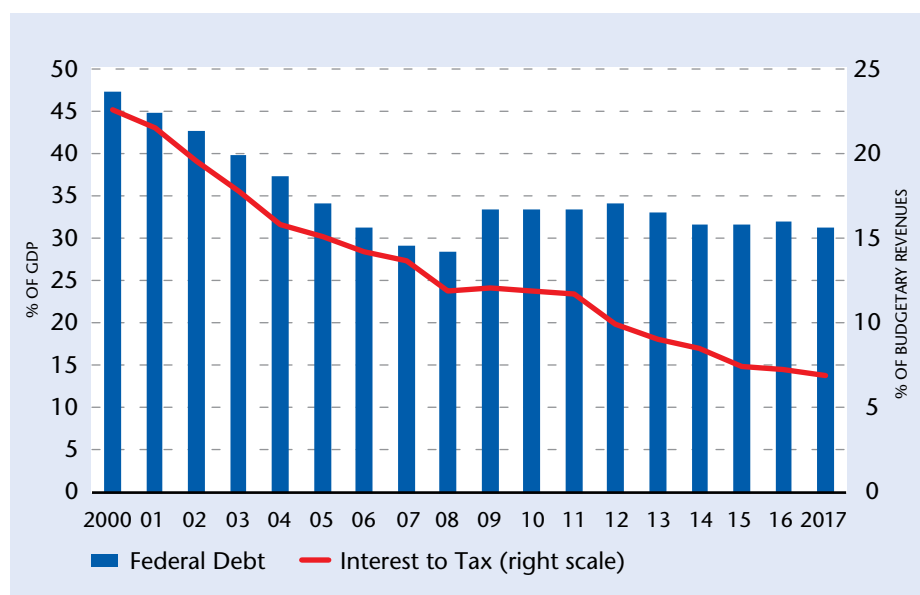
Year-over year growth in the Canadian economy now sits at 1.4 per cent. It is a modest growth rate—much higher than the growth rate going into the 2015 election, but still a significant deceleration from the 4.4 per cent growth rate peak in the spring of 2017. Weakness in the goods sector is restraining this growth rate. In addition, there has been ongoing weakness in investment raising concerns about the level of longer-term growth rates in Canada.

Notwithstanding the roller coaster ride in growth over the past four years, the economy now sits in a relatively good place—operating near its potential. The unemployment rate stands at 5.7 per cent for July, compared to 7.1 per cent in October 2015. The level of employment stands at 19,030 thousand, up from 18,007 thousand in October 2015. This is an impressive rate of job creation—up more about 40 per cent over the previous four years (2011 to 2015).

PBO released its election proposal costing (EPC) baseline projections in June 2019. It is assumed that all political parties will use it as their starting point in developing fiscal plans.

The PBO baseline assumptions are largely consistent with Budget 2019. Economic growth rates rebound in 2020 and hover around potential over the medium term. The unemployment rate remains at historic lows.

**Chart 2: Federal Accumulated Deficit to GDP and Interest Bill to Revenue**



Source: Department of Finance, 2018 Fiscal Reference Tables

Short- and long-term interest rates rise moderately over the short term and then stabilize. Overall price inflation is assumed to stay at 2 per cent. Oil prices remain flat. Any new finance minister would love to have this outlook become reality.

Based on these largely favourable economic planning assumptions, the PBO fiscal outlook has the projected federal deficit in the \$20 to \$25 billion range over the next two years, up from \$14 billion. The low deficit figure in 2018-19 reflects strong growth in budgetary revenues, resulting in part from a strong labour market. Finance and PBO expect revenues to more in line with historical norms thereafter. Over the medium term, the budgetary deficit declines in nominal terms and as a percent of GDP, but is not eliminated.

**I**n this baseline fiscal outlook, before new political party measures, which could be in the range of \$2 to \$5 billion a year, modest budgetary deficits of about 1 per cent of GDP are here to stay.

Is it responsible to run modest budgetary deficits over the medium term? What if all political parties simply add their PBO costed measures to this

baseline? Would an extra \$20 billion of debt after four years fundamentally change Canada's long-term fiscal health? The answer—it depends.

By and large, Canada could easily absorb modestly higher debt over the next medium term and remain fiscally sustainable over the long run. My guess is that is what most political parties plan to do—run higher budgetary deficits.

From a macroeconomic perspective, this is not likely the best policy. With an economy operating at potential (long term trend), a better path is for fiscal policy to be neutral with respect to growth (budgetary balance or small surpluses), not expansionary (structural budget deficits).

From a public policy perspective, a political case could be made for running modestly higher budgetary deficits. Clearly, economies like Canada are facing significant adjustment measures. We do not have plans with numbers to show what it will take to slow the increase in income disparity. We do not have plans with numbers to show the cost of adjustment to climate change. We do not have plans with numbers to show the cost of adjustment to the coming impact on

employment of artificial intelligence and robotization. We know that we need to increase investments in our youth where disparities are large, as is the case for Indigenous children.

If political parties propose running higher budgetary deficits over the medium term (than the PBO election costing baseline), then citizens should demand a quid pro quo.

1. As recommended by the IMF, Canada should have fiscal targets or a rule that constrains government spending. The targets or rule (involving the budgetary balance, debt and program spending) should be sensitive to changes in economic outcomes.
2. Political parties should commit to open and transparent spending reviews before significant new spending is undertaken. Reallocation of spending should be based on program evaluations that are made publicly available. As fiscal space is being used up that will constrain future governments and generations, we should ensure all opportunities are undertaken to improve the quality of spending (e.g., performance, inclusion, longer-term investment)
3. We need political parties to strengthen the link between fiscal policy and well-being of citizens. Other countries, including New Zealand—which tabled its first “wellbeing budget” in May—are already moving down this path. In this framework, budget measures and spending are presented to citizens in a way that focuses on what matters to well being (children, health, education, environment, communities etc). International organizations like the OECD are supporting this development with analytical tools that demonstrate the importance of a spending mix that supports inclusive growth. **P**

*Kevin Page, founding President and CEO of the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Democracy at University of Ottawa, was Canada's first Parliamentary Budget Officer.*

**Chart 2: 2019 EPC Fiscal Baseline Projection (Summary Level)**

| \$ billions<br>unless otherwise<br>indicated | PROJECTION    |               |               |               |               |               |               |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|  | 2017-<br>2018 | 2018-<br>2019 | 2019-<br>2020 | 2020-<br>2021 | 2021-<br>2022 | 2022-<br>2023 | 2023-<br>2024 |
| <b>Total budgetary revenues</b>              | 311.2         | 332.1         | 337.9         | 348.9         | 365.1         | 379.6         | 393.3         |
| <b>Total program expenses</b>                | 308.3         | 322.9         | 334.9         | 345.2         | 350.7         | 360.3         | 371.2         |
| <b>Public debt charges</b>                   | 21.9          | 23.1          | 23.7          | 27.0          | 29.8          | 31.8          | 33.4          |
| <b>Total expenses</b>                        | 330.2         | 346.1         | 358.6         | 372.2         | 380.5         | 392.1         | 404.5         |
| <b>Budgetary balance</b>                     | -19.0         | -14.0         | -20.7         | -23.3         | -15.4         | -12.5         | -11.2         |
| <b>Federal debt</b>                          | 671.3         | 685.4         | 706.2         | 729.4         | 744.9         | 757.4         | 768.6         |
| % of GDP                                     |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| <b>Budgetary revenues</b>                    | 14.5%         | 15.0%         | 14.8%         | 14.7%         | 14.8%         | 14.9%         | 14.9%         |
| <b>Total expenses</b>                        | 15.4%         | 15.6%         | 15.7%         | 15.7%         | 15.5%         | 15.4%         | 15.3%         |
| <b>Budgetary balance</b>                     | -0.9%         | -0.6%         | -0.9%         | -1.0%         | -0.6%         | -0.5%         | -0.4%         |
| <b>Federal debt</b>                          | 31.3%         | 30.9%         | 30.9%         | 30.8%         | 30.3%         | 29.7%         | 29.0%         |

Sources: Finance Canada and Parliamentary Budget Officer





The swearing-in ceremony for Canada's first gender-equal cabinet, Rideau Hall, November 4, 2015. Adam Scotti photo

## Because it's 2019: Checking in on Gender Budgeting in Canada

*As our readers know, fiscal policy is the MRI of any government's principles and priorities, which makes the budgeting process the place where the rubber meets the road on issues of equality. Canada introduced Gender-Based Analysis in 1995 and the Trudeau government has doubled down on the process, an undertaking lauded by both the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development but which could benefit from stronger performance incentives and results measurement.*

**Helaina Gaspard  
and Emily Woolner**

Following the Liberal victory in the 2015 federal election, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sent a strong message by establishing Canada's first gender-equal cabinet. Since then, the federal government has been very vocal in its commitment to "embed feminism in all aspects of government work."

The Liberal victory in 2015 was strongly affected by the support of female voters. According to Elections Canada, over nine million women voted in the 2015 federal election, and 42 per cent of those women voted Liberal, as opposed to 25 per cent Conservative and 23 per cent NDP. Certainly, above and beyond the policy considerations, the government's

commitment to gender equality is a political pitch to retain those crucial Liberal voters.

A notable example is the implementation of ‘Gender-Based Analysis Plus’ (GBA+), an analytical tool designed to assess how government policies, programs, and legislation impact diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people. Although it has been used at the federal level since the mid-1990s, the government has expanded the scope and effect of this program in recent years. Since 2015, Status of Women Canada (SWC), the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), and the Privy Council Office (PCO) have shared responsibility for integrating GBA+ into government processes. Since 2018, GBA+ has become the guiding framework for gender budgeting in Canada.

Budget 2019 included an entire chapter dedicated to GBA+ analysis, with commitments and investments to narrow gaps in areas such as wages and labour-force participation between men and women. The government can be applauded for making a clear political commitment to change through the adoption of frameworks, strategies and reporting requirements. But how will the government measure the connection between its GBA+ strategies and results over time? In its current form, the GBA+ strategy requires alignment to investments, programs and policies to help to trace, for instance, its potential impact on narrowing the wage gap and equalizing labour force participation.

While gender budgeting is a stated policy goal of the current government, what does it mean in practice? How do Canada’s practices on GBA+ compare to those in other countries? Does the current GBA+ structure enable government and citizens to track results over time?

The IMF’s 2017 survey on gender budgeting among G7 countries found that statements on gender budgeting impact assessments alone do not imply outcomes: it is “not whether an initiative is labeled as ‘gender budget-

**“The government can be applauded for making a clear political commitment to change through the adoption of frameworks, strategies and reporting requirements. But how will the government measure the connection between its GBA+ strategies and results over time?”**

ing’ but whether fiscal policies and public financial management (PFM) practices and tools are formulated and implemented with a view to promoting and achieving gender equality objectives, and allocating adequate resources for achieving them.”

Canada is recognized in the IMF report as having implemented gender budget statements and gender impact assessments, as well as having partially applied relevant gender performance indicators, parliamentary control and oversight measures, and gender audits.

Similarly, a 2018 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report applauded the Canadian government’s tangible progress in various institutions, policies, and accountability structures to promote gender mainstreaming in government activities. The creation of the department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), the addition of GBA+ assessments attached to budget proposals, and the government’s Gender Results Framework, were among the accomplishments listed.

**B**ut what do these assessments really mean? Is GBA+ working in Canada in practice by changing behaviour and influencing decisions to change results over time? Or, is Canada resting on political commitments without the requisite reporting system to link investments to outcomes over the medium- and long-terms?

In 2015, in his fall reports completed before the election of the Trudeau government that October, Canada’s Auditor General (AG) reported

that significant improvements were needed to implement and monitor the effectiveness of GBA+ in the government. Despite the promotion of GBA+ by Privy Council, Treasury Board and Status of Women, these efforts had not translated into concrete action on the part of departments and agencies. The challenge, it appears, is the translation of stated commitments into practice.

In response, the newly elected government developed an Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis (2016-2020) to support the full implementation of GBA+ across federal departments and agencies.

Interestingly, this plan focuses on encouraging better behaviour without incentivizing an outcome. Public servants in executive positions manage a variety of competing issues and perspectives from equity to official languages, as well as their own policy portfolios and legally-defined financial reporting requirements. The current parameters for GBA+ analysis are compelling at first glance but may be insufficient to have a real policy impact beyond a change in rhetoric. For instance, the Government of Canada’s Gender Results Framework remains quite vague. Aside from listing a few key objectives for gender equality (e.g. “Equal and full participation in the economy”) and showcasing some recent government initiatives (e.g. the Canada child benefit), it offers virtually no explanation as to how government policies, initiatives, and investments are connected to measurable results. One can argue that it’s nearly impossible to define causality on social policies and pro-



grams, but performance budgeting never hurts. Linking investments in policies and programs to desired outcomes is more likely to generate targets and plans to achieve goals. As it stands, there is no clear way of understanding the influence or impact of Canada's GBA+ commitments without an evaluation framework that's connected to budgets and policies.

International peers outside of the G7 have lessons for Canada to help it enhance the application of GBA+ as more than a policy statement, but an integral component of its budget plans and performance assessments.

Consider Austria, an early adopter of gender budgeting, and a globally recognized leader in the area with its outcome-oriented approach to gender budgeting. All federal ministries and national bodies in Austria are required to submit gender equality objectives and devise appropriate outputs and indicators in preparation for the annual budget. Austria also incorporates gender equality evaluations into impact assessments, performance reports, and into the purview of the Austrian Court of Audit. By connecting spending to measurable and relevant outcomes, the OECD has said, the Austrian approach is a "leading international practice" in gender budgeting. Canada could emulate this practice by integrating gender budgeting into a performance management framework. To do this, the federal government could develop and align equality targets to resource-allocation decisions for priorities in the Gender Results Framework. This could enhance political and administrative transparency for resources and for results.

**P**rogress can also be made at the local level. India and Mexico, for example, have extended efforts to subnational jurisdictions, such as states and cities. In India, the government has developed gender budget statements using analytical matrices for gender budgeting, which ministries and departments use to design policies and request funding.

This is arguably a more effective approach than the gender budget statement used in Canada, which is more akin to a mission statement. India has also institutionalized a Gender Budget Secretariat into its Ministry of Finance and has created Gender Budgeting Cells (GBC) in different sectoral ministries. These GBCs are governed by a charter established by the Ministry of Finance and are responsible for reviewing departmental programs and conducting performance audits, organizing training and workshops, and disseminating information and best practices. The states of Karnataka and Kerala have integrated similar measures into their respective state machineries.

**“In India, the government has developed gender budget statements using analytical matrices for gender budgeting, which ministries and departments use to design policies and request funding. This is arguably a more effective approach than the gender budget statement used in Canada, which is more akin to a mission statement.”**

In addition to increasing funding for women—particularly in the health sector—and improving monitoring and implementation mechanisms at the national level, Mexico City has launched measures relating to employment, social services, and safe urban transportation for women. Indeed, it is sometimes more practical to focus on specific policy sectors in order to achieve meaningful gender-equality results, as evidenced by the case of Rwanda. Rwanda began gender budgeting with four pilot programs in the ministries of education,

health, agriculture, and infrastructure, before expanding its practices to national and subnational governments. So too in Canada, an active strategy on a smaller number of critical policies, well-executed with provincial/territorial and municipal partners, could be more impactful than a passive response across the federal government.

When compared to other jurisdictions, Canada's approach to GBA+ is directionally sound but weak in operationalization. Looking to the cases highlighted above, there are a number of practices and lessons the next government may wish to adopt if it is serious about aligning resources to outcomes on gender-related matters. The key practices include:

- 1) Emphasize the importance of the issue by requiring (not requesting) that analysis aligned to outcomes be undertaken when submitting budget proposals (as in Austria).
- 2) Define the purpose and goals of GBA+ for Canada in concrete terms, with measurable metrics against which policy proposals can be tested (as in India).
- 3) Demonstrate progress by focusing and targeting initial efforts on GBA+ analysis to specific departments and issues. Instead of trying to revolutionize an entire system at once, work incrementally to integrate the analysis first in departments and agencies that stand to have the most impact (as in Rwanda).

Canada can be credited with its commitment to gender budgeting. It now has an opportunity to link that commitment into measurable results. **P**

*Helaina Gaspard is director, governance & institutions, Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) at the University of Ottawa. Emily Woolner is a research assistant at the IFSD. This piece is an update of an article published by IFSD in May, 2019.*



Thirty-three years after their historic 1984 campaign debate, Brian Mulroney and John Turner share a collegial moment at a Speaker's reception marking the 150th anniversary of the first sitting of Parliament in November 2017. *House of Commons photo*

## The Debate that Changed Debates

*Leaders' debates have become heavily coached and prepped affairs, exhaustively rehearsed in mock matchups that produce moments choreographed down to cocked eyebrows and eye-rolls. It's a convention of campaign culture that arose largely as a result of one riveting, game-changing exchange in the 1984 campaign that Canadian candidates have spent years trying to repeat or, more often, avoid.*

**Peter Mansbridge**

The membership of the living Former Prime Ministers of Canada Club isn't that big. It's seven names—Joe Clark, John Turner, Brian Mulroney, Kim Campbell, Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin and Stephen Harper—and it's rare that they all gather in the same room. It's an exclusive club, to be sure, with some bitter old rivalries on that list that have lasted decades.

But in June of this year, they were all together in Ottawa, championing the same cause. It was a special din-



ner to celebrate one member's 90th birthday. John Napier Turner, once the darling of the Liberal Party, the "crown prince" they called him during the Pierre Trudeau days, the man who would in 1984 become the country's 17th prime minister, if only for a couple of months. It had been a long-anticipated run-up—as justice minister, finance minister and leader-in-waiting, in exile on Bay Street—to a reign that came crashing to the ground before it really started.

Sitting in the room ready to say a few words about their fellow club member were Messrs. Clark, Chrétien and Martin. Sending video wishes were Ms. Campbell along with Messrs. Mulroney and Harper (a future member, Justin Trudeau, made a guest appearance). Each chose their words carefully but the bottom line was the same; they were full of praise and kind comments and you could tell John Turner was moved. It was one of those nice, non-partisan evenings most of us find hard to associate with Ottawa anymore.

There were a few good laughs, and one moment that brought the house down. The Mulroney video was vintage MBM, as his friends call him. There he was, probably in his Montreal law office, dressed impeccably, everything in place. Perfectly ironed shirt, sharp tie, gold cuff links, I'm sure. And then, out came that booming baritone with his tribute. I didn't take notes, so I'm paraphrasing, but the gist was:

"John, I wish I was there. I had every intention of being there. But when I told Mila I had to go to Ottawa, she was not happy. She told me we had long ago made other commitments for the evening. I tried to make the case, but the harder I tried the more firm she got. It was an argument I lost."

And then, in the way only great storytellers can pull off, there was that Mulroney pause before the punch line.

"John," he said, waiting another beat for impact, "John, I had no option."

He knew the crowd—full of pols and

**“With the TV leaders’ debate still to come, the Liberals were hoping for a strong showing to hang on to power. Turner was experienced, while Tory leader Mulroney, they thought, was not.”**

journos who'd been there in the 1980s—would thunder. And they did. They remembered. How could they forget?

**B**ack in the summer of 1984, with that year's election campaign in its final weeks, the Liberals were in trouble. Turner, who had started off with a lead thanks to his June leadership convention victory, suffered gaffe after gaffe. There were allegations of "bum patting", rusty performances at the podium and muddled policy announcements. It all seemed to open the door for Mulroney. But with the TV leaders' debate still to come, the Liberals were hoping for a strong showing to hang on to power. Turner was experienced, while Tory leader Mulroney, they thought, was not.

In Canada, TV debates had started in 1968 and usually, it was all about the optics and expectations. In the first one, Robert Stanfield looked old, Pierre Trudeau didn't. Trudeaumania won. In 1979, people expected the inexperienced and often clumsy Clark would stumble and bumble before the cameras. He didn't, and he won. In 1980, the Liberals had an early, major lead in the polls after Clark's minority government had fallen over an unpopular budget. Trudeau declined to participate in a debate on the grounds that Canadians had seen him, Clark and NDP Leader Ed Broadbent debate less than a year earlier. It was really an effort to avoid any unforced errors, and it worked. The lead held and Trudeau cruised back to power. Which brings us to the key moment of the 1984 debate, if not the entire campaign.

**A**s Trudeau was slipping out the door of government and before he handed the keys

to Turner, he ordered up more than 200 patronage appointments for Liberal loyalists, forcing Turner to either cancel them or make them. He not only didn't cancel them, he added another 70 of his own. So, on the evening of July 25, six weeks before the September 4th election, when the English-language leaders' debate turned to patronage, Mulroney had plenty of ammunition in targeting what looked like Turner's double weakness in both doing Trudeau's bidding and then failing to take responsibility for it.

MULRONEY: "You owe the Canadian people a profound apology."

Turner was on his heels but still, he could have let it pass. He didn't, instead responding chin first.

TURNER: "I have told you and I told the Canadian people Mr. Mulroney that ....." and then came the big mistake, "I had no option."

MULRONEY: "You had an option, sir, you could have said, 'I'm not going to do it, this is wrong for Canada and I am not going to ask Canadians to pay the price.' You had an option to say no, and you chose to say yes, yes to the old attitudes and the old stories of the Liberal Party. That's not good enough for Canadians."

"I had no option," Turner repeated lamely.

"That is an avowal of failure," Mulroney interrupted. "That is a confession of non-leadership, and this country needs leadership. You had an option, sir, you could have done better."

Game, set, match Mulroney. And the largest majority government in the country's history followed weeks later, with the Conservatives winning 211 seats in what was then a 262-seat House.

For all the hype that often surrounds media coverage of debates, it's actually pretty rare for signature moments like that one to happen. I've seen all the debates since the first one in 1968 and while each has been worth watching if for no other reason than to introduce the leaders in a somewhat unfiltered way to the voters, few, other than '84, have contained moments that actually framed the election. Ironically, the same two men four years later had perhaps the second-best debate moment when Turner challenged Mulroney's patriotism over the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement.

"I believe you have sold us out," Turner told Mulroney, tapping into a deep-seated fear among some voters of Canada's economy and culture being taken over by the Americans. Mulroney was rocked but recovered in the final weeks of the campaign.

Of the many debates since the classic Mulroney-Turner battles of the 1980s, there has always been much excitement in the days leading up

to debate night, often by the media seemingly desperate for a "moment". You know the lines they use. I sure do, having used them enough myself: "the big mistake", "the knock-out punch". But history has proven that, in the event, those moments rarely happen.

Perhaps part of the reason is the leaders now train, in some cases, for months to have the right words and phrases to handle their opponents. What to say and perhaps more importantly, what not to say. Image consultants suggest what to wear, where to look, when to smile, when to frown. Stand-ins are brought in to play rivals as staged debates are played out trying to anticipate what might happen and how best to counter attacks from the other side.

In some cases, potential lines are tested, even focus-grouped to see how an audience will react. As a result, when the real action starts it's sometimes almost comical because it's so obvious that certain moves or phrases or looks were pre-programmed.

What Mulroney and Turner proved was that prep is important but nothing beats being natural and reacting with exactly what you really believe. It can be dangerous—disastrous, even—but it can also produce the winning moment.

When Brian Mulroney dropped his one-liner on the crowd in Ottawa in June of this year, I quickly glanced at John Turner. That line in its original form had been devastating. It had arguably cost him his dream all those years ago, but there he was on this night laughing just like the rest of the room. It had taken 35 years, but in that instant at least, the pain was gone.

That, too, was a moment. A good one. For everyone. **P**

*Contributing Writer Peter Mansbridge, longtime anchor and chief correspondent of CBC's The National, is now producing documentaries and appearing as a public speaker. He is a Distinguished Fellow at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto.*



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Column / Don Newman

## In Case of Minority, Break Glass

**A**s campaigning heated up over the summer ahead of the October federal election, many public opinion polls were predicting that when the ballots are counted on election night, Canadians will find they've elected themselves a minority government.

If those predictions prove true, some will say the results reflect what Canadians really want—for no single political party to have complete control of the country's agenda for four years, and for small parties to have some say in the decision making process.

Others will see it the other way. That the instability that comes when no party has a majority to control the House Commons will lead to little being accomplished and the likelihood of, before long, another election.

If history tells us anything, it's that minority governments often beget other minority governments. In the 1960s, between June 1962 and November 1965, three elections produced three minority governments, one Progressive Conservative and two Liberal.

More recently, between June of 2004 and October 2008, three elections produced three minority governments, one Liberal and two Conservative. As the polls have been suggesting, the coming election may well produce a minority government after two majorities in a row, but whether that happens this time or not, minority governments are likely to be a bigger part of Canada's political and electoral future.

That's because regional voting patterns and the growing number of political parties that are competitive in at least some of the regions presage that success for different parties in

different parts of the country could become more common.

This fragmentation breaks with the status quo of the past half century, with the Conservatives having a stranglehold on the prairies and the Liberals anchored in Quebec. There have been exceptions, particularly in Quebec, when first the Bloc Quebecois and then the New Democrats replaced the Liberals dominance. Those exceptions usually produced Conservative governments.

With all the parties competitive in at least some parts of the country, it will be difficult for Justin Trudeau and the Liberals, or Andrew Scheer and the Conservatives—the two leaders and parties that have the chance of forming a government alone—to reach the 170 seats needed to control the House.

**W**ith the increasing possibility of minority governments, it's time for a change in the rules of the House of Commons to make things more stable, and to fit with the fixed date elections act that was also designed to do that.

As the saying goes, "It's too late to fix the roof when it is raining," and the partisan self-interest demonstrated by all MPs in the last Parliament when they considered electoral reform shows how difficult any change can be. So, we should consider a plan now for operating in minority parliaments that would, over a period of time, benefit all parties equally.

Under this proposal, a minority government defeated on a budget vote or other confidence measure would have forty-eight hours to collect itself and negotiate with other parties before facing another vote in the House

of Commons. At the same time, the opposition parties would be free to make deals among themselves.

The second vote would not be about anything specific. Just the question of whether the government has the confidence of the House.

If the government won that vote it would continue in power. If it lost, the Governor-General would ask another party leader, almost certainly the leader of the Opposition, to try to form a government. Forty-eight hours later, that new government would face the same simple confidence vote in the House. If it survived the result, it would be in power, at least until the next confidence vote. But if it lost the confidence question, the Governor-General would set the date for a general election.

This plan is attractive on a number of fronts. While it preserves the opportunity for minority parties to force an election if they want to, minority governments, knowing they could also be replaced without an election, would govern themselves accordingly.

Right away, they would be more conciliatory and consultative with the other parties in the House; more careful of things that could grow into scandals and cause major shifts in public opinion. In all, produce better government all round.

If the coming election produces a minority government, it is too bad that the rule changes won't be in place to make the House of Commons more predictable. In that case, the only thing that can be hoped for is that an increasing number of minority governments in the future would convince politicians and the public that the rule changes are necessary. **P**



Ask this audience of voters about health care and they'll tell you it's back as a ballot question in 2019. BC NDP Flickr photo

## Could Health Care be on the Ballot Again?

*Health care is arguably the second-most politically charged issue in Canada after pipelines. It is the cornerstone of a social safety net that Prime Minister Brian Mulroney once famously called a “sacred trust” between Canadians and governments of all parties. This election season, the more precise ballot question may be pharmacare.*

**Shachi Kurl**

**H**ealth care may be a revered Canadian value, but it has been more than 20 years since it's had the potential to become an actual ballot issue in a national campaign.

Arguably, the last time issues of health care access, treatment, coverage and funding elbowed their way onto the election agenda was 1997,



when the Liberals, then led by Jean Chrétien, found themselves on the receiving end of acrimony rather than applause for announcing during the first week of the campaign that they would cancel planned cuts in health transfers to the provinces. But even then, the coverage and criticism had more to do with the timing of the move than with health funding policy.

Since then, health care has not exactly been the driving issue for voters. This year may be different. For the first time in a long time, federal party leaders are finding themselves compelled to say something about our physical well being.

In June, the Trudeau government's Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare submitted its report to Parliament recommending the creation of a new drug agency that would expand the list of prescription medicines covered by the taxpayer at an eventual cost of \$15 billion a year. Trudeau endorsed the council's recommendations, which essentially double down on the pharmacare provisions of the 2019 federal budget. In

**“For the first time in a long time, federal party leaders are finding themselves compelled to say something about our physical well being.”**

August, the government unveiled a plan to reform the regulation of prescription drugs to reduce patented drug prices.

Also in June, the NDP unveiled its party's platform, including a universal pharmacare program, with plans to eventually see coverage for dental care, eye care, hearing care and other costs enshrined in the Canada Health Act.

In August, Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer, if elected promised to increase health and social transfer payments by at least three per cent a year. He said he was making the commitment to dispel any suggestion from his opponents that he would cut spending.

Usually, politicians—and their war room strategists—start paying atten-

tion to an issue once they've figured out it's important to their potential voting bases. Crucially, for Canadians over 55—the very ones who may be reliably counted on to actually vote—their lived experiences interacting with the systems meant to safeguard and improve their health reveals a structure showing signs of flu-like symptoms.

A comprehensive study from the Angus Reid Institute finds one-in-five Canadians aged 55 and older, upwards of two million people, report accessing primary care has been a significant problem. Challenges run the spectrum from having difficulty seeing a family doctor or GP (26 per cent say this), to waiting for advanced diagnostic tests, an appointment with a specialist, or surgery. They are also twice as likely to

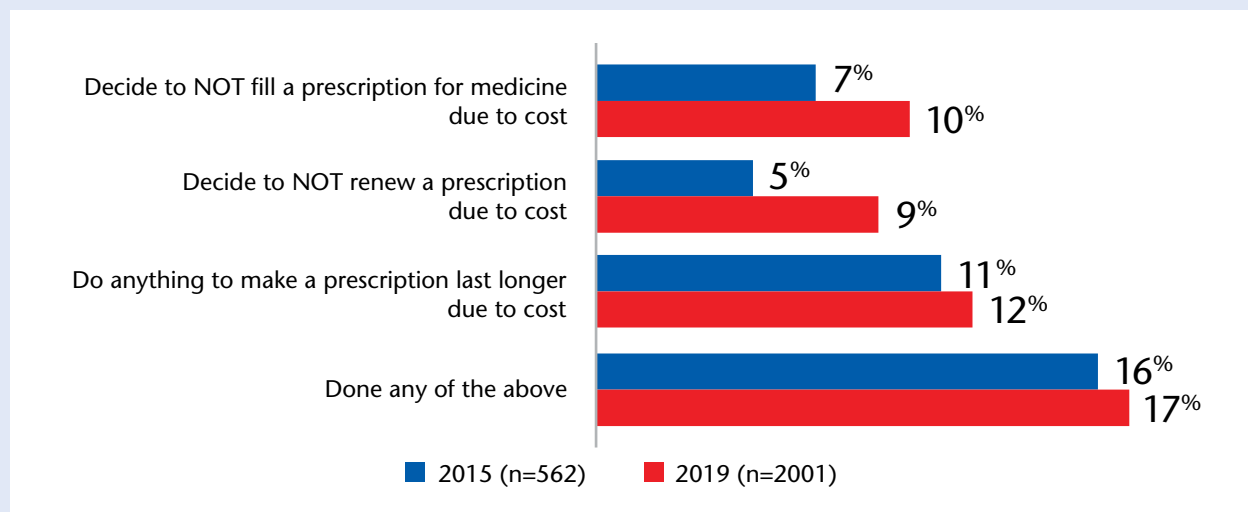
### Primary Care: How Easy is it to See Your Doctor?

**If something comes up, how easy or difficult is it to get an appointment to see your family doctor/GP? (among those ages 55+ who have a family doctor, n=1919)**



## One-in-Six Face Barriers to Prescription Drug Access

In the past 12 months, did you or anyone in your household do any of the following?  
(Those saying "yes" shown, responses from Canadians ages 55+)



Source: Angus Reid

say the quality of health care in their own province is deteriorating rather than improving.

**“As much as some parties may wish to define health care as a ballot issue in the upcoming election, it is impossible to know what exactly will move voters until we are into the thick of the campaign.”**

Of course, after the visit to the doctor, there is also the follow-up, which often includes prescription medication. When the Institute first looked at the issue of affordability of doctor-prescribed drugs four years ago, it found one-fifth of Canadians overall, and 16 per cent of those over the age of 55 were skipping doses, splitting pills, not refill-

ing or simply not filling prescriptions at all, due to cost.

Four years later, this struggle for a significant segment of the country is ongoing, especially for those with household incomes lower than \$50,000. Where you live also makes a difference, with those in Alberta and Atlantic Canada most affected. Little wonder then, that politicians are sensing Canadians' anxiety, while also anxious themselves to find a way to gain political advantage by talking about it.

The intersection of health care and politics is more complicated. Conversations about “health funding” and “health coverage” are complex and varied, and thus hard to sum up in a sound bite. Politicians and political analysts would do well to remember that when talking about “health care”, they need to be focused on “whose health care?”. For aging Canadians, it may well be orthopedic issues, dementia and end of life care. For young women it may centre on fertility. For parents, the primary concerns will be focused on the health and thriving of their

young children. Health is deeply personal and proprietary.

Of course, as much as some parties may wish to define health care as a ballot issue in the upcoming election, it is impossible to know what exactly will move voters until we are into the thick of the campaign. Will the ghosts of SNC-Lavalin come back to haunt the Trudeau government? Will the performance and leadership of Scheer and Singh be deciding factors? One way or the other, health will be part of the 2019 election discourse. The extent to which voters make their decisions based on it remains to be seen. **P**

*Contributing Writer Shachi Kurl is Executive Director of the Angus Reid Institute, a public opinion and research firm based in Vancouver.*



# Canada Has Its Own Diabetes Crisis

**Jan Hux**

**T**he recent attention given to health care affordability south of our border has received international interest, thanks in part to the troubling stories of U.S. citizens with Type 1 diabetes coming to Canada to purchase more affordable insulin, a therapy needed to live. It's hard to imagine residing in a country where a person already dealing with the difficult task of managing a chronic disease like diabetes are also unable to afford their prescribed medication.

Or is it?

Despite our reputation for quality health care we live in a country where since 2013 there's been no strategy to address one of the most significant health care challenges of our time—the diabetes epidemic. Canadians living with diabetes are feeling the brunt of it, which is why Diabetes Canada has been urging all governments to take strong steps to address the epidemic of diabetes—a disease that already affects one in three Canadians directly and is growing at a rate of 40 per cent per decade. More specifically, we are recommending Diabetes 3600, a nationwide strategy that brings together metrics, best practices and continuous improvement expertise through partnership with the provinces, territories and municipalities to address key needs for people with or at risk of diabetes.

Let's look at what's happening in Canada when it comes to managing diabetes. We have significant problems with affordable access to diabetes medications, devices and services. Variation in public, private and out-of-pocket payments creates a patchwork quilt of coverage across the country that



affects not only medication but test strips, syringes, needles and the latest glucose monitoring devices. Those gaps in access lead to suboptimal treatment and, in turn, a heavier burden of complications such as blindness, amputation and kidney failure.

**T**he announcement from the U.S. administration indicating plans to import Health Canada-approved prescription drugs raises concerns of potential drug shortages on this side of the border and has prompted some much-needed attention from Canadian policymakers.

The U.S. government's choice of the path of least resistance to addressing drug prices comes with significant risk to Canadians with diabetes. At the local level, the "insulin caravans" threaten to clear out supplies at small border-town pharmacies. Fortunately, reports of such supply shortages have been very limited so far but the stakes are high for those with Type 1 diabetes for whom a gap in access of even a day or two can be life-threatening. Should dozens of states start

importing insulin in bulk—as pending legislation would allow—the risk goes up substantially. As we said in a recent letter co-signed by a number of Canadian health and consumer organizations, the Canadian drug supply is not sufficient to meet the demand of a market 10 times larger. If medications manufactured for a Canadian marketplace are somehow diverted by demand from south of the border, the cost to Canadians could be incalculable. Now is the time for Canada to develop a strategy that will *prevent* potential drug shortages, rather than waiting for this inevitable situation to occur.

Of course, while Canadians with diabetes need assurance that their government will protect their access to insulin and other essential medications, that reassurance will not be enough. Addressing isolated issues in response to a threatened crisis, as in the case of U.S. importation of insulin, neglects the greater need for a comprehensive approach to address this epidemic and the unsustainable burden it creates for individuals and health care systems. A priority issue for all federal election candidates to tackle is the need for an integrated strategy to address diabetes, from prevention, through screening to treatment and all within a measurement framework that will demonstrate that ambitious targets are being met. The collaboratively developed Diabetes 360° framework represents just such a strategy and Canadians with and at risk for diabetes deserve no less. **P**

*Dr. Jan Hux is the President and CEO of Diabetes Canada. She holds an MD from the University of Toronto and a Masters in Epidemiology from Harvard.*

# Book Reviews



## From a Work in Progress to the Campaign Trail

John Ivison

*Trudeau: The Education of a Prime Minister.* Toronto, Signal/McClelland & Stewart, 2019.

Review by Robert Lewis

The 2011 federal election was a disaster for Michael Ignatieff and his Liberal party. The Grits won the fewest seats in their storied history (34, compared to 166 for Stephen Harper's Conservatives and 103 for Jack Layton and the NDP). Ignominiously, and perhaps mercifully for him, Ignatieff lost his seat in the Liberal stronghold of Etobicoke-Lakeshore. Across town, Bob Rae, the man who should have been Liberal leader, was experiencing a rollercoaster ride in historic Toronto-Centre riding. As the election wound down and the national campaign ran out of steam, Rae faced probable defeat. But on election night the tally from the advance polls—folks who had voted earlier—put him over the top. Campaigns do matter.

Wisely, John Ivison refrains from speculation about the outcome of the 2019 election which, today, looks as unpredictable as any race in recent history. What the accomplished Na-

tional Post columnist does deliver is a meticulous and polished account of how Trudeau the younger scaled the political heights and how he's exercised power as Canada's 23rd prime minister. The book is not a pretty portrait, which should come as no surprise to regular readers of Ivison's column. The 306 pages fairly bristle with anecdotes and examples of a flawed prime ministry, "a triumph of symbolism over action."

Ivison's central thesis is that Trudeau and his team are smug in a view that Canada is a more progressive country than it really is; that it can be ruled from the left-of-centre. In images borrowed from U.S. neo-conservative Thomas Sowell, Ivison writes that Trudeau conducts himself as the "anointed", on a higher moral plain than the unworthy "benighted" who do not buy his vision. Ivison contends that the prime minister's celebrity, "lifetime of privilege" and impulsive behaviour—factors in his initial popularity—are the same ingredients that could propel him from office just as quickly.

**“Ivison contends that the prime minister's celebrity, 'lifetime of privilege' and impulsive behaviour—factors in his initial popularity—are the same ingredients that could propel him from office just as quickly.”**

Ivison documents chapter and verse on the Trudeau government's failure to deliver on promises—"making things happen"—in favour of communications and an unerring ability to get in the way of its own story. "The government," he writes, "has not lived up to as many of its promises as the majority governments that preceded it." Among its failures, Ivi-

son submits, is not delivering on its First Nations agenda, electoral reform and balanced budgets—all "third party promises" made when the Liberals were a lowly opposition unit.

Then there were the self-inflicted SNAFUs: the elimination of the small-business tax; the SNC-Jody Wilson-Raybould-Jane Philpott saga; his Bahamian vacation freebie with the Aga Khan; his futile attempt at a trade deal with China; and his unproductive \$1.5-million jaunt to India with his family and a trunk full of traditional attire befitting a local wedding. Still, Ivison is careful to give the other side. In this case, he quotes an assertion from an interview with Gerald Butts, Trudeau's *eminence gris*, that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the government "were out to screw us and were throwing tacks under our tires to help Canadian Conservatives." Besides, added the Trudeau friend and adviser, "we did 48 meetings and he was dressed in a suit for 45 of them."

If there is a disappointment in the narrative, it is the paucity of insider information about how Trudeau makes his decisions. Unexplained is what really causes our first Instagram PM to so consistently compound a crisis with his own words and actions. To borrow from a quote once attributed to a frustrated New York Mets manager Casey Stengel, "can't anyone there play this game?" Perhaps, Ivison suggests, the reason Trudeau's performance has been so uncertain is that he "had never managed anything bigger than the Katimavik youth charity." As for his early years, that chapter is competently sculpted mainly from Trudeau's own 2014 autobiography, *Common Ground*, and the public record, but there are no telling revelations.

Ivison does dispense credit where it is due, if a tad grudgingly. The Canada Child Benefit, increased in this pre-election season, has been "transformative for lower-income Canadians", while enhancements to the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security would bring incomes for retired seniors within reach of a minimum



wage. Iverson acknowledges that a defence review resulted in substantive commitments beyond the recent promises of either main party. He also takes note of other government accomplishments: the passage of the so-called middle-class tax cut, cannabis legislation and the prompt landing of Syrian refugees. Reform of the Senate appointments process also “changed the face of the Senate for the better.”

In fairness to Trudeau, a series of events beyond his control forced him into a sharp course correction. Where once he could count on Liberal governments across Canada that governed 29 million people, Iverson notes tellingly that the election of the NDP-Green coalition in B.C. and right-leaning governments elsewhere have reduced that number to 1.6 million—and accentuated Trudeau’s awkward balancing act between a carbon tax and ownership of a pipeline.

And then came the surprise blow with the election of the “bull travelling with his own china shop.” Donald Trump’s challenge to NAFTA caused Trudeau to shuffle his cabinet and focus the government’s energy on Washington, often at the cost of other pressing issues. And the U.S. demand that Canada extradite Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou led to the retaliatory arrest of two Canadian executives in China and an ongoing crisis that will surely flame during this election season. The sad part, as Iverson notes, is that “American pre-eminence meant that Canada was obliged to tack in whatever direction the capricious U.S. captain chose to sail.” In pursuit of a new NAFTA deal, Iverson writes, “Trudeau had sacrificed his own self-respect.”

More profoundly, Trump’s battle cry—“America First”—has fundamentally clouded the outlook of the small-l liberal values that animate Trudeau and his team, and other democratic governments. From Russia to Hungary, from Italy to Brazil and points in between, the very notions of open borders, multiculturalism and the rule of law have been called into question. Even in Canada, we are now confronting issues of hate speech, the validity of science-based evidence and social tolerance.

For all the challenges, Iverson argues, the Trudeau government “should be

in clover”: the economy is growing, unemployment is low, the New Democrats under leader Jagmeet Singh are in disarray and Conservative leader Andrew Scheer is largely unknown and certainly untested. But after his impressive come-from-behind majority victory of 2015, Justin Pierre James Trudeau, 47, is now facing the fight of his political life. In Iverson’s words, “the Liberals’ prime asset has become their biggest liability.” As the October 21 election looms, it seems Justin will be lucky to emulate his father. In 1972, Trudeau père lost his “Trudeaumania” majority and emerged from the election with a two-seat margin. That too was a late October election. Justin was 10 months old. **P**

*Robert Lewis, former Ottawa bureau chief and later editor of Maclean’s, is the author of Power, Prime Ministers and the Press: The Battle for Truth on Parliament Hill, Dundurn, 2018.*



## A Rare and Courageous Autobiography

Jagmeet Singh

*Love & Courage: My Story of Family, Resilience and Overcoming the Unexpected.* Toronto. Simon & Schuster Canada, 2019.

Review by Robin V. Sears

Having read too many pre-campaign memoirs to count over the years, I’m usually underwhelmed

by them, especially by politicians’ autobiographies. Few of us are courageous enough to share with the world our faults, failings, humiliations and disasters. Never before have I read one that brought tears. Jagmeet Singh’s brave and candid account of his having survived and then blossomed out of a very tough childhood is that remarkable.

In the 1960s, Canadian immigration was tightly capped by nation of origin and therefore race. Before a merit-based system was introduced, there were years when we admitted more than 50,000 Europeans and fewer than 1000 Asians. Jagmeet Singh’s parents were the first-generation beneficiaries of a new vision of Canada.

As his impressive new biography makes clear, not all Canadians got the message. Racist taunts and schoolyard bullies were part of the lives of that first generation. Singh offers the best counsel possible that also precludes damage to victims: no matter how humiliating the insult, defend yourself, with your fists if necessary, but do not match hate for hate.

Singh could have produced just another narrative of the immigrant’s journey: the tough years of financial struggle, the families forced to live in different cities, the relentless determination of parents that their children excel at education, etc. There were three obstacles to the credibility of such a tale—sexual abuse, racism, and alcohol.

Singh takes special care to try to educate a reader oblivious to the tragic history of the Sikh community. He focuses especially on his generation, which grew up in the aftermath of the state-orchestrated massacre of Sikhs following Indira Ghandi’s assassination by her Sikh bodyguards in 1984-85, the 1985 Air India bombing by radical Sikhs, and the Sikh nationalist movement of that era.

His generation of the Sikh diaspora was unique to Canada; greater in number, per capita, than anywhere else. Sikh activists willing to advocate violence were also here—though in absolute numbers they were a tiny, embittered group. Canada was where their most spectacular crime was planned and carried out.

The murder of thousands of Sikhs, those who died under the machine guns of the Indian Army—first at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab and later across the sub-continent—left an indelible scar on Sikhs everywhere. In Canada, where the counter-attack was launched in June 1985 with the bombing of a Delhi-bound 747 that killed 329 people, the pain was especially acute. No matter how loudly the community leadership denounced the bombing, it didn't erase the stain in the eyes of many Indo-Canadians, and among a large percentage of Canadians.

The Sikhs have never told the story of their denigration and persecution well. There has never been a Sikh emissary who transcended the community able to transmit to the world a countervailing account of what the community has endured. Sikhs were the largest contingent of non-European soldiers in the First World War, with a shocking rate of mortality. They were promised, but then cheated of, their own province in a newly independent India in 1947. The list of indignities they've suffered is very long.

That one of the world's first anti-caste, anti-hierarchy, anti-patriarchy, socially and religiously tolerant religious faiths is today widely condemned as barbaric and terrorist is a deeply felt hurt. Traditional 'Sikhi' values and conduct are astonishingly liberal, given the rather different convictions of the Hindu and Muslim faiths they grew up among.

Jagmeet Singh's parents, like many survivors, attempted to bury their pain, to refuse to be humiliated by the racist taunts and political insults hurled at them from the day of the Air-India crash until today. But like other survivors of systemic persecution, Sikh parents of their generation, wracked with anger and guilt, often passed their pain onto their children: with a denial of empathy or enforced silence, and sometimes alcohol and abuse.

Even as a teen, Jagmeet began to wrestle with a better way to help his community to move on. With his brothers, he organized discussion and commemoration events. Later as a politician, he fought—not entirely successfully—for wider and deeper Canadian understanding. Naively, he

appeared at some events where he tried to convey his message, one that later was encapsulated as "love and courage," not recognizing the impact of sharing a room with those offering a more violent vision of a Sikh future.

As a very green young political leader he has grown quickly. He can now put his community's suffering within the context of the agonies still endured by too many indigenous Canadians, and other more recently arrived racialized groups. He appears to be embracing an ambitious message: "New Democrats' values, and mine, are a message of inclusion—especially our advocacy for those who suffer from racism daily, the neglected and those left behind. Our commitment to courage in the face of injustice, and our love for even those who attack us, are the Canadian values.' It is a foundation that makes even some traditional New Democrats uneasy.

He faces Liberals once again anointing themselves as the guarantor of those values, despite a shaky record in actually defending them. He faces two conservative parties openly flirting with race-whispering. Given his slow start as leader and with poll numbers still hovering in the teens, he risks little with a bold progressive message.

The first clue in his autobiography that this is where his journey might lead comes in accounts of schoolyard bullying and violence. From a determination to become tougher and stronger through martial arts and the ability to inflict pain and suffering on his attackers emerges a recognition that that journey leads only to anger and bitterness.

An ironic twist, one that he took many years to resolve, was that his martial arts guru, to whom he was devoted, was also his sexual abuser. The man who was to give him confidence instead instilled guilt, shame and self-doubt. Singh describes this humiliation with veiled deft strokes only, leaving a reader to fill in the awful blanks—and to be a little in awe of his ability to have survived it. Unlike the privileged childhoods of his competitors, by the time he was sixteen he had endured routine racist harassment, the enduring pain of sexual abuse and his father's descent into alcoholism.

This led to abusive behaviour by his dad and the near collapse of the Singh family. He does not oversell his role in guiding the family through a long set of disasters. But his leadership is clear. He describes the struggle to help his father to finally win control of his addiction with restrained emotion. His father's fight to win his way back to being a doctor, a father and a husband is nonetheless powerful.

As they emerge from the final meeting, having won the long battle to have his father's psychiatrist licence restored, one can only imagine their sense of relief and regret. His father says, "Thank you for supporting me and the family for so long ...I'm lucky to have any [time] left. I want you to make the most of yours...go live your life. I'll take it from here."

Liberated from this burden, following his first celebratory vacation alone, Jagmeet Singh does. He takes up the political torch at the behest of his brother who will not give up his determination it should be Jagmeet's role.

What happens next is a fateful chapter for a leader about to enter his first national campaign. For Canada, too—and especially for the millions of racialized Canadians who will be watching intently.

We're accustomed to hearing Americans regularly claim, often about some triumph over racist adversity, that this "could not have happened anywhere else on earth." "Except maybe in Canada," one is tempted to shout. It is, however, probably true to say that a second-generation Sikh could not have risen to the leadership of a national political party anywhere but here.

Campaigns matter, and the poll numbers are as volatile as we have ever seen. But where leadership is concerned, character matters most. On the strength of his autobiography, Singh has established himself as the winner of those stakes already. **P**

*Contributing Writer Robin V. Sears, a Principal of the Earncliffe Strategy Group, is a former National Director of the NDP during the Broadbent years.*



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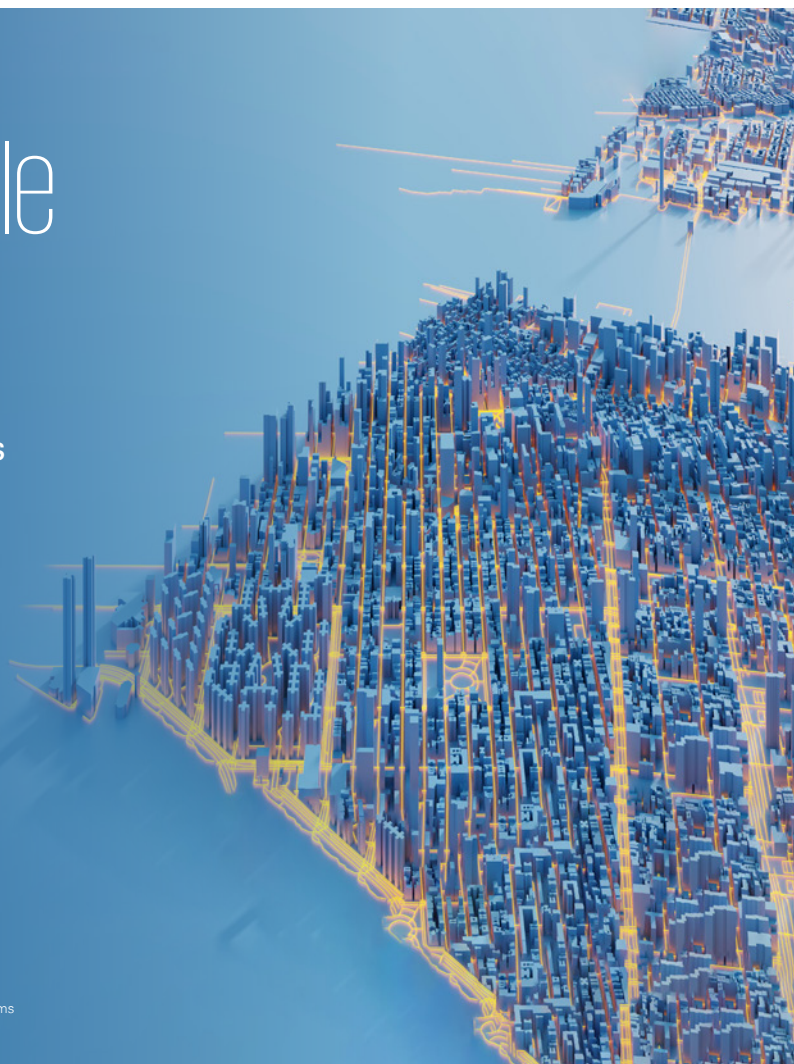
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# An Open Letter to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the Leader and the Finance Critic for the Conservative Party

**The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau,**  
P.C., M.P.  
*Prime Minister of Canada*

**The Honourable Andrew Scheer,**  
P.C., M.P.  
*Leader of the Official Opposition*

**The Honourable William Morneau,**  
P.C., M.P.  
*Minister of Finance*

**The Honourable Pierre Poilievre,**  
P.C., M.P.  
*Finance Critic for the Conservative Party*

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau, Minister Morneau, Honourable Scheer and Honourable Poilievre,

Our proposal to remove the capital gains tax on gifts of private company shares and real estate is very relevant to the upcoming election. This measure will resonate with small business owners who wish to give back to their communities in every riding across Canada. There are hundreds of thousands of small business owners in our country and 110,000 are members of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB). Not only would small business owners be grateful, but the millions of Canadians who are served by our hospitals, social service agencies and universities, as well as arts and cultural and religious organizations would also benefit from this increased funding. Additional donations from the private sector would be approximately \$200-million per annum every year going forward. This increased funding would come at an important time when all levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal are facing significant fiscal challenges.

The Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector issued its report in June 2019 and Section 3 recommended **INCENTIVIZING THE DONATION OF REAL ESTATE AND PRIVATE COMPANY SHARES.**

**We urge both the Liberal and the Conservative parties to include this measure in your election platforms.**

From a public policy perspective, this measure would address an inequity in the current Income Tax Act by providing the same tax treatment for donations of shares by owners of small businesses as is currently the case for owners of shares in publicly listed companies. In addition, it would provide Canadian charities with the same opportunity to raise private sector funding on the same basis as is with their U.S. counterparts. Any concern about valuation abuse is addressed by the condition that the donor must sell the asset to an arm's length party.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to the upcoming election!

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



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