

Canadian  
**Parliamentary**  
review



*Volume 48, No. 3*

***Sports Centre:  
Parliament Hill***



***SportsCentre:  
Parliament Hill  
p. 64***

Although Eric Janse, Clerk of the House of Commons, laments that it's not currently soccer season, whether games are held outdoors or on indoor fields, staff, pages, and parliamentarians find ways to keep playing the beautiful game year-round. Below: The Library of Parliament's ParlCats take on parliamentarians, including former MPs Matt DeCourcey, Robert Falcon-Ouellette, the late Paul Dewar, and Pierre-Luc Dusseault (in green jerseys).



The *Canadian Parliamentary Review* was founded in 1978 to inform Canadian legislators about activities of the federal, provincial and territorial branches of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and to promote the study of and interest in Canadian parliamentary institutions. Contributions from legislators, former members, staff and all other persons interested in the objectives of the Review are welcome.

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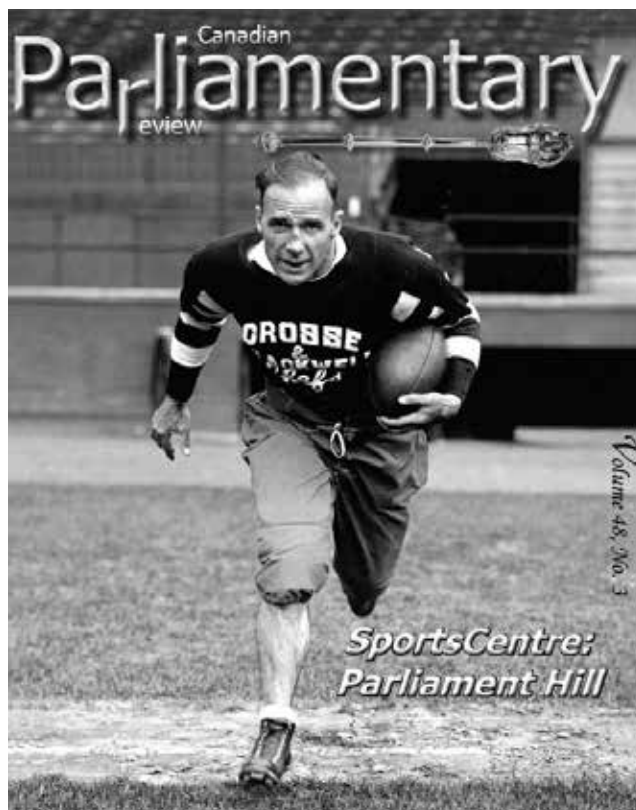
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# *Dear Diary: Rookie MPPs Share Thoughts on Their First Month(s) in Office As It Happened*

When parliamentarians are asked to think back about their first few days or weeks on the job, frequently they'll describe it as being mostly a blur. There is so much to learn, so many people to meet, so much information to absorb, and so much to do; often, only a few special moments stand out. But getting a sense of what these early days are like would undoubtedly be helpful for politicians who hope to follow in their footsteps and want to know what to expect. The Canadian Parliamentary Review asked two newly elected Members of Provincial Parliament in Ontario to keep a record of their first 30 days after election night on February 27, 2025, in which they would briefly note what was happening and how they were feeling. Prior to publishing these notes, the MPPs were also asked if they wanted to add information on other notable days that occurred in the interim, and to offer any thoughts about what they've learned as they found their footing in the Assembly.

## **Joseph Racinsky, MPP and Tyler Watt, MPP**

**Joseph Racinsky**  
MPP for Wellington-Halton Hills  
(Progressive Conservative)

### **Day 1**

Feeling excited and overwhelmed. Spending time returning all the messages of congratulations, and putting together a list of supporters who should be thanked for their efforts over the past few weeks.

Spent some time picking up signs and clearing out the campaign office. Wrote a letter to the Town of Halton Hills formally resigning my seat on municipal council.

Received onboarding information from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

### **Days 2 and 3**

I came down with a bad cold on Saturday. I think the adrenaline of campaigning had been holding it at bay! Received my email for personal use and filled

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*Joseph Racinsky is MPP for Wellington-Halton Hills (Progressive Conservative). Tyler Watt is MPP for Nepean (Liberal). They were elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for the first time on February 27, 2025.*



Provided

**Joseph Racinsky**



Provided

**Joseph (right) with Ted Arnott, the former MPP for Wellington-Halton Hills and the former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. The two met for lunch six days after the election.**

out two applications for the Legislature – one for my new phone, and another for official name spelling on documents such as the oath of allegiance.

#### **Day 4**

Scheduled meetings with potential staff and the outgoing MPP. Was invited to the first Caucus meeting that will take place later this week. Had a virtual meeting with Legislature staff, going over the global budget, personal financial information, and benefits. I attended the Halton Hills council meeting where my successor was chosen, and I was recognized for my service and congratulated. My wife was able to join me, and I was very thankful for the warm goodbye from my council colleagues.

#### **Day 5**

Visited the outgoing MPP's office, got a key, and met with a potential staff member who was interested in

staying on. I was able to get a good understanding of how things had run during our conversation.

#### **Day 6**

First Caucus meeting in Queen's Park. It was good to meet a number of the newly elected members. I received my security pass from the Legislature and had headshots done. I was also able to order thank you cards with my name and new title. Spoke with PC Caucus Services about the process for hiring staff and had a contract done up for a staff member to begin on March 10.

I had a lovely lunch with my predecessor, and we discussed a number of things pertaining to life as an MPP. That evening, I went to my first public event, a celebration of my predecessor put on by the County of Wellington. I coordinated volunteers to clear out what remained in the campaign office tomorrow. My local riding association scheduled a meeting to go over the campaign and finances on March 15.

#### **Day 7**

MPP Orientation Day. A very informative day put on by the Clerk and Legislature staff. Each organization within the Legislature gave a presentation to let us know what services were available. Three sitting MPPs from all parties participated in a panel, which provided some very helpful insight. Enjoyed a group lunch with staff and all new members. The most helpful part of the day was a "job fair" at the end of the day, when all the branches had booths set up for us to ask questions and get information. Technology Services were also there to get us set up right away with our devices. Human Resources and Finance were there to ensure we had filled out all the necessary forms. It was extremely helpful to have all those things available in one place. I also picked up the thank you cards. That evening, I visited the campaign office to grab everything that was left and closed it for good.

#### **Day 8**

Spent the day at the constituency office in Fergus with the new staff member. Cleaning up the office and sorting out final payroll forms.

#### **Days 9 and 10**

Able to take some personal time this weekend. A chance to take a breath and spend some much-needed time with my family.



**Joseph (seen here with Ontario Assembly Clerk Trevor Day) is officially sworn in as the 1077<sup>th</sup> person to serve the people of Ontario as a Member of Provincial Parliament on Day 18.**

#### **Day 11**

Morning Caucus meeting, created an MPP social media page, wrote an article for the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce publication.

#### **Day 12**

Morning Interview with YourTV Halton. Visited the constituency office to get a number of small things in order. Met with another potential staff person. The office is starting to come together, and I'm thankful I was able to get it up and running so quickly. I strongly believe that the people need their MPP.

#### **Day 13**

Spent the day at the constituency office working with my staff to order the necessary materials for the office, sort through the furniture, and ensure the security system and internet were set up and paid for. The Assembly's technology division came to the office

and updated all the computers and monitors. Received an invitation to the Cabinet's swearing-in ceremony on March 19.

#### **Day 14**

Met with the Chief Librarians for Wellington County and Halton Hills. Continued to work out of the constituency office, getting my calendar put together. Created a job description to be posted for an executive assistant position. Approved the design for promotional materials and office signage.

#### **Day 15**

Spent the morning in the constituency office and then took an inventory of the election signs we recovered. Picked up gifts for some key volunteers. Officially signed the finalized lease to take over my predecessor's constituency office, including some renovations that will begin in early April.



With the legislature in session, Joseph took his seat and began taking part in debate. On April 16, he gave his inaugural speech (following an all-nighter to prepare).

#### Day 16

Morning meeting with my Electoral District association to go over the campaign and the finances. Afternoon event at the Fergus Legion, Zone C-3 convention. I brought greetings on behalf of the Province of Ontario and helped present two King Charles III medals. This was my first official event as MPP, and it was a humbling experience. I am so privileged to be in this position.

#### Day 17

Attended church and took a day of rest.

#### Day 18

Officially sworn in as the 1077<sup>th</sup> person to serve the people of Ontario as a Member of Provincial Parliament. Was able to take my wife on a tour of Queen's Park, and we enjoyed a visit with my predecessor. Feeling very thankful.

#### Day 19

Got some much-needed work done on my vehicle (there's been a lot of travel). Stopped in the constituency office to sign some forms. I have a bad cold again, probably not getting enough sleep!

#### Day 20

Attended the swearing-in ceremony of Cabinet. It took place at the Royal Ontario Museum. It was great to see so many of my Caucus colleagues, and am feeling proud of our leader, Premier Ford.

#### Day 21

Spent the day in the constituency office catching up and reviewing resumes. Wrote an article for the Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce publication. Was interviewed by Elora/Fergus Today, an online news organization. Attended a meeting of the Georgetown Agricultural Society (I'm currently serving as its secretary).

### Day 22

I attended the Mayor's Breakfast put on by the Erin Chamber of Commerce. Met with a potential staff member at the constituency office, as well as the Mayor of Centre Wellington and a council colleague of mine from Halton Hills.

### Day 23

Busy day driving around the riding. I attended a grand opening for a shop in Acton. After that, I was able to attend a curling fundraiser in Fergus. Got there just as the bagpipes started to play for the opening ceremony!

### Day 24

Back to church for a day of rest.

### Day 25

I had the opportunity to show some family friends around Queen's Park. It's still hard to believe that I am able to work here!

### Day 26

I met with another potential staff person and conducted a few other interviews. I was able to offer one of them a position starting April 2. I had the privilege of calling a couple of our hospitals with some funding news. In the evening, I presented a certificate to the Georgetown Bread Basket as they received the Citizen of the Year award.

### Day 27

I spoke with MPP Mike Schreiner, he wanted to share his priorities as an opposition member and develop a good relationship with me as his only neighbour. I met with the Canadian Mental Health Association of Waterloo-Wellington at their main site in Guelph and then went to Queen's Park for a reception celebrating Greek Heritage Month.

### Day 28

I toured the Georgetown Hospital and had lunch with Wellington County Council in Guelph. Lots of driving! After lunch, I had an opportunity to meet with the Warden and Chief Administrative Officer to discuss issues that are important to the County. I was able to offer another individual a position in my office

starting April 2. I also received the schedule for Private Member Bills. My slot is in October, looking forward to hearing some ideas from constituents on what they feel would be beneficial.

### Day 29

Spent the day in the constituency office meeting with...

- a local couple
- President of Metropolitan University of Toronto
- Hope Spring Cancer Support
- a landowner and the Mayor of Puslinch
- St. Joseph's Health System

Thankful for my staff and how they are able to manage my already busy schedule effectively!

### Day 30

Attended a Food4Kids food drive in Georgetown. Great to see members of Halton Hills Council again!

### Some other memorable days

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#### April 16, 2025

Today, I had the privilege of giving my inaugural speech in the Legislature. Yesterday, they were asking for volunteers but few people were ready, so I said I would be happy to go. Stayed up all night last night writing the speech! An incredible experience being able to stand in that beautiful place and share a bit about myself and the hopes and dreams of the people I represent.

#### May 1, 2025

Was able to have lunch with a page from my riding. It was fun to hear her perspective on what goes on at the Legislature. We are in many ways experiencing it for the first time together. I'm really thankful for the opportunity to be an inspiration to other young people.

### Other notes

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One of the most difficult and unexpected aspects of becoming an MPP is the need to hire staff and manage an office. We don't have large teams, and it's not easy work. It's important to find good people and find them quickly. This is definitely a big part of the first 30 days. I am very thankful to have found the staff that I have.

One, the most rewarding parts of the job is being able to share good news with your constituents. Whether it's a community group or municipal project, it feels really good to help solve people's issues.

Personal days are very important, and I'm thankful that I have mostly been able to reserve Sundays for worship. My predecessor shared that Premier Mike Harris would encourage his members to reserve one weekend a month for family. I'm not sure how many followed that advice, but it's good advice.

I try to be in the constituency office as much as possible. Whether it's keeping up on the concerns of residents or being accessible to the community, I definitely like to be in the office when possible.

**Tyler Watt**  
MPP for Nepean  
(Liberal)

### Election Night

I'm overwhelmed with gratitude and still in shock – Nepean made history, and I'm ready to get to work. I am tired, but had an amazing celebration with my team, friends, and family.

#### Day 1

A 6:30 am interview with CBC morning about the election and win. Barely slept from all of the adrenaline. Phone hasn't stopped buzzing. I'm answering messages from friends, family, and future colleagues – trying to soak it all in. Wish I could go to bed, but have to go to the campaign office to empty and clean it as we have to be out by end of day. Bittersweet – we built something special here.

#### Day 2

With the campaign office closed, I spent the day relaxing with loved ones, reflecting on how far we've come. This victory belongs to every volunteer and voter who believed in a better Nepean. I spent a few hours responding to messages and calling people to thank them.

#### Day 3

Spent the day organizing and planning my week. I also need to hire staff. Thankfully, I had an idea of two people from my campaign who I knew wanted to work for me. That is a good starting point. I am lucky



**Tyler Watt**

to have colleagues in my party who are incumbents and have been through this before. They have been incredibly helpful and always there to answer any question I have – such as, how many staff do I need for the constituency? I have to book a flight and hotel in Toronto for orientation. Barely had any room on my credit card to pay for this, as I took a month off from work to run. Stressful!

#### Day 4

Virtual onboarding meeting with Ontario's Legislature. I am blown away by how supportive and helpful the staff are – especially with how overwhelming, new, and fast this process is. In the evening, I held my first meeting post-election with several key stakeholders. People are hopeful – and I feel the weight of their trust and hope.

#### Day 5

Interviews with *Ottawa Citizen* and *iPolitics* about our win in Nepean. It still feels surreal. Also spoke with a

realtor who is going to help me find a place in Toronto. Things are starting to feel real and even more exciting. Packed for my trip to Toronto for in-person orientation. I have one suit I have been wearing for years. I hope it's enough. I also need to learn how to tie a tie.

### Day 6

My first time ever flying direct to Toronto for the sole purpose of going there. Checking into a hotel. Worried I forgot things in Ottawa. I am not used to living out of a suitcase. I had dinner with former Premier Kathleen Wynne this night. That was really special.

### Day 7

Official onboarding has begun. Security photos, HR paperwork, and orientation – this is real. Sitting in the Legislature Chamber – I am absolutely blown away. The room is beyond words. All of the new MPPs around me are filled with excitement and nerves. It was nice to have four other new MPPs from my Caucus there as well. A great bonding experience for us all, regardless of party.

### Day 8

Walked through Queen's Park and felt a mix of awe and responsibility. This place holds so much history – and now I'm part of it. I went up to the fourth floor, where my office will be. Fun fact – I interned for former MPP Mitzie Hunter for a summer while in nursing school, and my office is now that office. Travelled back to Ottawa.

### Day 9

I didn't expect the travel to be as exhausting as it is, but perhaps that is recovery from the election. I attended my first official event as MPP for International Women's Day. I felt honoured to stand in solidarity with the women in my life and my community who've inspired my journey.

### Day 10

I now have access to the Parliamentary Portal and Member's Guide. I read through every page, now having more questions than I started with. Having an office budget and being a boss is a new thing for me. I have always worked independently within a team as a nurse. I want to make sure I do this right and have the opportunity to lead a happy and productive team. Sat down to sketch out early goals – both for the riding and for Queen's Park.



**Tyler and other newly elected MPPs, such as Lee Fairclough (Etobicoke-Lakeshore), attend onboarding activities at the Assembly on Day 7.**



**Prior to his election as an MPP, Tyler worked as a nurse in an Ottawa-area hospital. On Day 18 he returned to his old stomping grounds to receive the “Champion of Care” award. He plans to work casually as a nurse to maintain his licence while in the Assembly.**

**Day 11**

My first question: How do I balance the pace here with the needs back home in Nepean? The answer is: build a great team. The Ontario Liberal Party now has party status and is hiring/ creating our Liberal Caucus Services Bureau. They will be a great resource, but I feel the need to get going with the constituency office, especially before I return to Toronto. I have hired two staff – both from my riding. They will be here to help

me get the constituency office set up, and one will come with me to Toronto during sitting weeks.

**Day 12**

Spent the day replying to messages, making phone calls, and setting up meetings. I am not the most organized person in the world, but this new role is forcing me to improve on this. My calendar has never looked so full.

### Day 13

Traveled to Toronto for my first official Caucus meeting. I'm the new kid, but I feel welcomed. I don't have much to say right now. I am absorbing as much information and wisdom as I can.

### Day 14

Traveled back to Ottawa for several events. I spoke at a local mosque, now for the first time as MPP. It feels special hearing "congratulations" so much. It is inspiring to see so many smiles and hope in people from my community.

### Day 15

Got a tour of the constituency office that I am taking over from the previous member. My staff and I were so excited walking through it, imagining all of the things we can do, where I can have meetings with constituents, and how I want to set up my office.

### Day 16

I forgot that I am a person and need some self-care. Hair cut, groceries, laundry, bills. Having neglected so many home duties, this was a good reminder. I am in an entirely new world and will have to figure out how to navigate work and home life.

### Day 17

Coffee with a high school teacher who inspired me. Full-circle moment. Preparing for the week ahead. Increasing rumours a Federal election is coming. Good thing I haven't put away my door-knocking clothes.

### Day 18

Today I was honoured with the "Champion of Care" award at the hospital I've worked at over the past five years. This was a very special thing to receive, especially as I leave my full-time position as a nurse and transition into my new job as an MPP. I will be staying on casually as a nurse to keep my license, skills, and head on the ground. It will be strange not working at the hospital as much, especially with how comfortable I am at that job.

Traveled to Toronto in the evening to prepare for my swearing-in tomorrow. Dry-cleaned my one black suit, which I've never done before. I'm used to scrubs.

### Day 19

Today is a busy day. I joined several new Liberal MPPs for our first television interview with TVO. I have been a fan of Steve Paikin and this show for a very long time. It is beyond amazing that I get to be on this panel. I was really nervous, and it was a brand new experience. Being put in makeup, prepped for possible topics and questions, having my hair adjusted before being filmed. I was really nervous, but I was proud of the interview result.

Caucus meeting next. Swearing-in at 4 pm. My family, friends, and team travelled from Ottawa to Toronto to come and be a part of this ceremony. My face hurts from smiling so much. I cannot wait to see the pictures.



**Tyler (right) joined TVO's Steve Paikin (centre) and several other newly elected Liberal MPPs for a televised interview on Day 19.**

### Day 20

I met with the Leader of my party to discuss critic portfolios. I asked for something related to health care and education. Very exciting to think I will be a critic of the Government and able to bring my experience as a nurse to the Legislature.

### Day 21

Ontario Nurses Association rally/ protests occurring throughout the province. I was able to attend one in Ottawa. It was surreal being there not only as a nurse, but now as an MPP. To see hope again in my colleagues meant the world.

I found out I will be the critic for Long-Term Care and Colleges, Universities, and Training. I am thrilled to have been given those portfolios.

### Day 22

Finally have access to the constituency email and phones – which have been ringing off the hook today with news from the local school board. Parents are concerned. I am not sure how to proceed with this, but thankfully, I have several colleagues in Ottawa who are experienced and are also receiving the same feedback. So, we had our first post-election Ottawa Caucus meeting to discuss how to handle this. It is exciting being a part of this team of MPPs.

### Day 23

It's a Saturday, but tonight I got to do a live on-air interview with CTV News Ottawa. We discussed the election and my win in Nepean. Again, a very fun experience. I am starting to get used to always doing new things. Not much time to think or worry about them. Trying to enjoy the moment.

### Day 24

Had a celebratory dinner with my mother and brother. Tried my best not to check my phone and spend all day answering texts and emails. It's hard because I find it incredibly fun. I learned my House duty schedule – meaning when I have to be sitting in the Chamber.

### Day 25

Back to Toronto for my next Caucus meeting and setting things up at Queen's Park. Learned a ton about

how the Caucus Services Bureau operates and what's to come. I cannot wait to get started at Queen's Park when the House sits. I've learned I will be a Second Vice-Chair for a committee. I do not know what this means yet, but it sounds exciting.

### Day 26

Traveled back to Ottawa. Interviewed several people for positions at my constituency office. Visited a school to speak with students about civics and the provincial government, and my role as MPP. Funny trying to share with them my role as I am freshly learning about it. Got advice from MPP John Fraser to start working on my inaugural speech. I've had some thoughts in my head about it, but probably should put it down on paper.

### Day 27

Today, someone called me "MPP Watt". That felt strange. I said you can just call me Tyler. It's a privilege and an honour to be in this position, and I will never take it for granted.

### Day 30

I can't believe it's been a full month. It's flown by. I've laughed, I've cried, and I've never felt more alive or excited. Thirty days in – I'm still learning, still growing, and still honoured to serve. This is just the beginning.

### Some other memorable days

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#### April 3, 2025

Constituency office staff training from the Liberal Caucus Service Bureau. I had so many questions, but appreciate how much information was shared here. It is a lot, especially never having been involved in this role before. I am excited about the fact that I will have an office dedicated to helping people. I want to learn as much as possible.

#### April 14, 2025

House now sitting. I am now sitting at my own desk/ chair in the Chamber. I am watching Question Period from here. Watching pros asking and answering questions. The thought of standing up and asking a question in front of all of these people, and cameras, is frightening.

### **April 16, 2025**

I got to ask my first question in the Chamber. I was so nervous that my paper was shaking. Note to self: use a paper lift/ desk next time. Take a deep breath.

### **April 29, 2025**

Inaugural speech in the House. It was incredible to have this opportunity and speak in the House about my adventure, mission, and riding of Nepean. I am starting to feel more comfortable speaking in the House.

### **April 30, 2025**

Moving into a new apartment in Toronto. I have to buy furniture for here, although all I really need is a bed and Internet. Over the last few months, I've learned that it's really just a place to sleep in between long days at Queen's Park.

### **August 5, 2025**

My sign for the constituency office on the building is finally up. This makes it feel official. Also, who would've thought it would take so long to get these things set up?

### **Other notes**

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I've had the opportunity to speak in the Legislature on numerous occasions, including welcome remarks to visitors, questions in Question Period, statements, and debates. The more I do it, the more comfortable I am getting. I still appreciate every moment I am in there.

Committee work has been fun. It is something I never expected in this role.

I have been traveling Ontario throughout the summer for Committee Hearings on Bill 9. It has been an interesting experience asking questions to presenters and interested parties who want to speak on the Bill.

The most surprising thing to me about this new role is how tiring all of the traveling can be. Also, I am used to being on my feet for 12-16 hours a day as a nurse. Now, I am sitting much more. I've been warned about the "freshman 30" new politicians put on because of this major change in lifestyle. I've made an effort to watch what I am eating and exercise when I can, but it is quite difficult to do in this role, especially with all of the traveling and living out of a suitcase for so long.

There is a large financial barrier to becoming an MPP. If you do not have money to start with, it cost a lot up front. Such as transportation, accommodation, etc. All is reimbursed in due time, but having to put it on a credit card is daunting.

# *Casework Training for MP Staff: The Application of Learning Strategies and Instructional Design*

The recruitment and onboarding of employees supporting parliamentary functions constitute a cornerstone of Members of Parliament’s success. While many MPs appoint former campaign volunteers, the skills required within a parliamentary context differ from those needed leading up to an election. A structured onboarding process—grounded in adult learning principles — bridges this gap and aligns staff competencies with the institutional framework of the House of Commons. This article outlines the strategy adopted by the Learning and Development Services of the House of Commons Administration to facilitate the integration of new Members’ employees. Drawing on a case study, the author examines each phase of the training design process—from initial needs analysis to the delivery of a recently implemented course entitled Introduction to Casework. This course, now included in the House of Commons training catalogue, aims to enhance the capacity of constituency office staff to effectively manage constituent inquiries and casework responsibilities.

**Robin Bruneel**

## **Contextual Overview**

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The recruitment of personnel to support Members of Parliament in their offices is a relatively recent development in the history of our institution. In December 1972, a central budget increase at the House of Commons allowed Members of Parliament, for the first time, to hire one—and subsequently two—secretaries to assist with their administrative tasks.<sup>1</sup> This funding increase paved the way, in December 1973, for the official opening of the first constituency offices.<sup>2</sup> Today, the steady influx of new parliamentary staff—commonly referred to as “staffers”—represents approximately 58 hires per month<sup>3</sup>. Each Member is typically supported by a team of six to eight employees who assist them in fulfilling their legislative, administrative, and representative duties, both in Ottawa and within their constituency. As of April 21, 2025, there were 2,225 employees supporting Members of Parliament across Canada, 65 per cent of whom were located outside the National Capital Region.

This workforce, now fully integrated into the parliamentary landscape, has grown steadily in both scope and influence. Newly added to the parliamentary landscape, it has gradually gained in importance and influence, prompting the Administration of the House of Commons to develop and enhance its integration processes in response to evolving institutional needs. In September 2020, the first iteration of an integrated and systemic program – the *Member’s Employees Onboarding Program (MEOP)* – was launched. While the Administration plays a central role in the onboarding of new employees, it is nevertheless important to note that responsibility for recruiting and managing staff remains the prerogative of Members of Parliament. Concurrently, each party or parliamentary office may also implement complementary onboarding initiatives tailored to its own practices and organizational objectives.

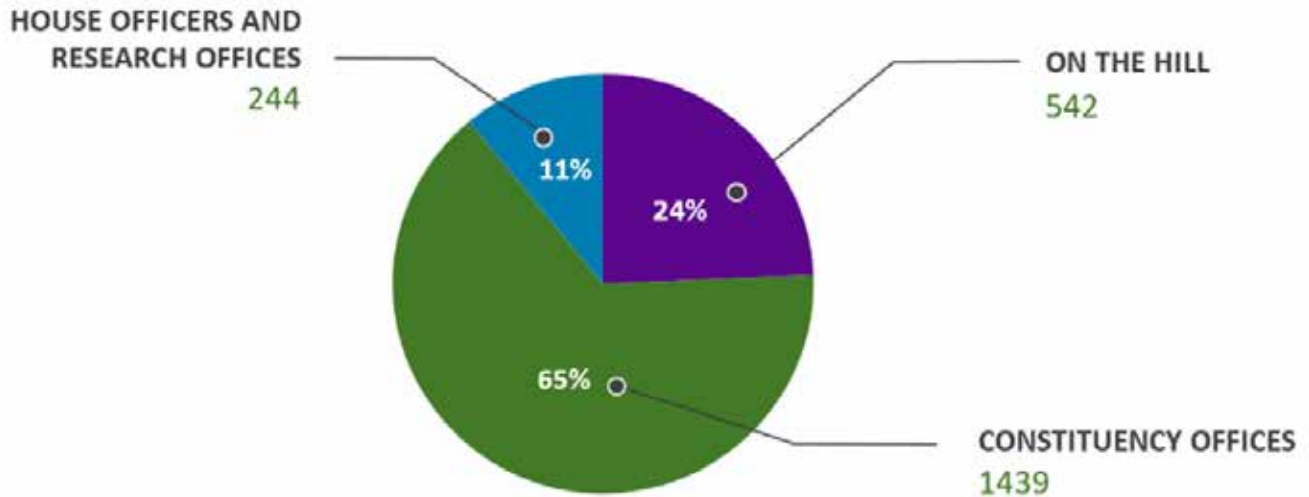
“My colleagues know better than most that every member of Parliament is supported by a dedicated staff. We could not otherwise do our job.”

Former MP Marc Garneau, March 8, 2023<sup>4</sup>

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*Robin Bruneel, B.A., M.A., is a Senior Learning Specialist working for the House of Commons Administration. Holding a Master’s degree in History and Communication and certified in Instructional Design, he is a member of the Learning and Development Services team that supports Members of Parliament and their staff at the House of Commons.*

Figure 1 – MP Employees Distribution as of April 1, 2024



### Program Overview

The *MEOP* is a non-partisan initiative administered by the House of Commons Administration, designed to support the integration of all newly hired employees of Members of Parliament. The program is delivered entirely online to ensure accessibility for staff across the 343 federal constituencies. These employees are interconnected nationwide through the network established by the House of Commons.

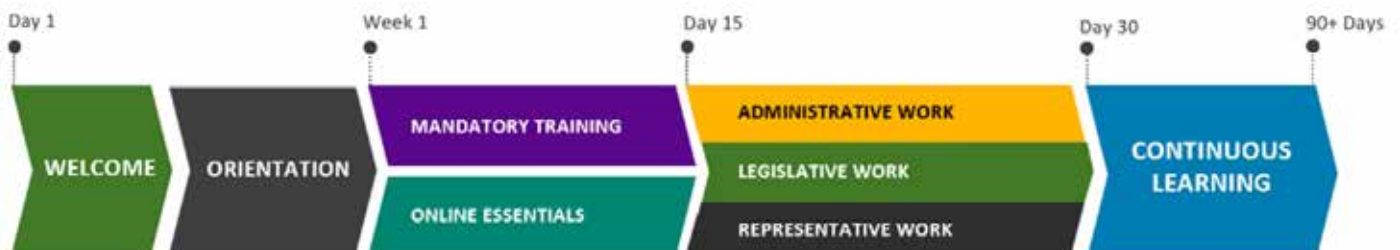
The *MEOP* aims to facilitate and accelerate staff integration by equipping new hires with the necessary knowledge and resources, early in their onboarding journey. Its design, coordination, and delivery are overseen by a team within Human Resources: the Learning and Development Services for Members and their employees. This team offers similar onboarding programs to MPs both following elections and during the course of a parliamentary term. It is composed of specialists in adult learning and organizational development, who work in collaboration with various service areas on Parliament Hill, including experts in finance, budgeting, human resources, client relations, legal affairs, and security services, the Sergeant-

at-Arms, operations teams, and procedure and IT support. The House of Commons Administration’s vision, *One House, One Team*, reflects the collaborative spirit underpinning the program.

The program begins on the new employee’s first day, following a recruitment process that includes security checks. An online user account is created, granting access to the House of Commons network through equipment prepared and configured by IT services. The employee then receives a welcome email, followed by a call from a representative of the Administration to review initial procedures and register them for an orientation session. During this session, participants learn about the roles of Members of Parliament, the operations of the House of Commons, and the services and tools available to support their duties.

The learning journey then continues with the integration of mandatory courses stemming from the *Canada Labour Code*, essential training in security and technology, followed by learning based on other areas of parliamentary functions: administrative, legislative, and representational work.

Figure 2 – Overview of the Member’s Employees Onboarding Program



Each stage of the program is reinforced through targeted communications from the Learning and Development Services team. The sequence is progressive and informed by a “just-in-time” learning approach, designed to deliver relevant information at the right moment to promote retention and application.

Following the orientation period, the employee may continue their professional development by exploring the catalogue of courses offered by the House of Commons, or by contacting the Learning and Development team to assess various options provided by external suppliers with agreements in place with the institution. Since 2022, a professional development fund of \$5,000 per MP office has been made available annually. This initiative, approved by the Board of Internal Economy,<sup>5</sup> enables MPs to finance training for their employees, with the aim of enhancing the competencies required to effectively support parliamentary functions.

### A Case Study: Introduction to Casework Training

How is an onboarding and training program designed, and what is the specific role of a Learning Specialist in that process?

A Learning Specialist brings targeted expertise in project management, as well as organizational and program development. This includes instructional design models, techniques for information retention, presentation strategies, and core principles of andragogy and adult learning. Among the most widely used development models is the SAM (Successive Approximation Model) framework—an agile variant of the ADDIE (Analysis – Design – Development – Implementation – Evaluation) model, which has been a standard in the learning industry since its formalization at the University of Florida in the 1960s.

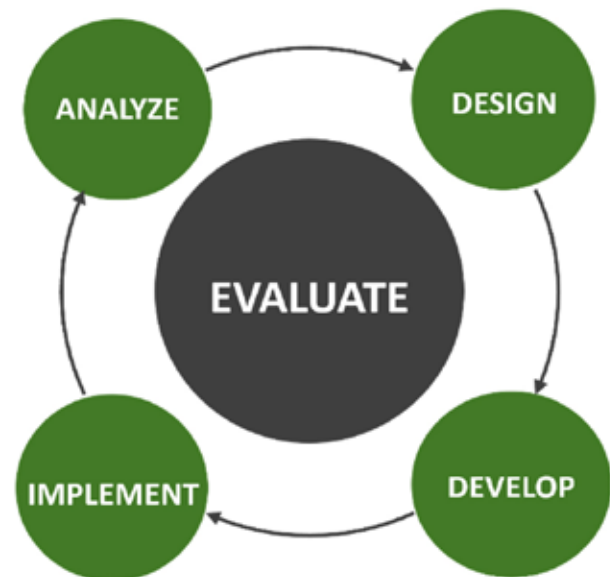
While many models exist and the socio-economic context of learners continues to evolve, the fundamental principles of learning remain largely constant: without practice, no retention; without active recall, no sustainable learning.

The model adopted for this case study, inspired by the SAM and ADDIE methodologies, encompasses the following stages of training development:

- **Analysis:** *What are the learning gaps that need to be addressed? Who is the target audience? What learning objectives are we aiming to achieve? What resources are available to support the development process?*

- **Design and Development:** *What subjects and types of activities should be included to bridge the identified gaps? Which subject-matter experts are best positioned to lead instruction on these topics? How can information be presented to enhance its retention?*
- **Implementation:** *Through which delivery method will learners engage with the training? What format best supports the pedagogical goals of the program?*
- **Evaluation:** *What feedback did the learner provide on the learning activity? What residual gaps or areas for improvement are identified following the delivery of the training?*

Figure 3 – The Lifecycle of a Learning Product



### Origins of the Project

Much like the well-known adage “the customer is king,” one might say that in the field of learning, it is the learner who shapes the strategy and drives development efforts. For this reason, learner feedback is regularly solicited to monitor satisfaction levels and assess the relevance of available learning services. Through this ongoing consultation process, an increasing need for additional support in representational duties at the constituency level gradually emerged.

When the MEOP was launched in September 2020, priority had to be given to integrating core components—orientation and personnel needs—before the 2021 general election was called, which led to the postponement of further program development.

In this context, the Learning and Development Services team initiated a series of consultations beginning in spring 2022, starting with the Library of Parliament. With its recognized expertise and mandate focused on research and analysis services for staff both on Parliament Hill and in constituency offices, the Library became a key partner.

This initiative marked the beginning of a fruitful collaboration between the two institutions, which extended over a period of more than a year.

### **Analysis of the Learning Gaps**

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The purpose of the analysis phase was to identify the learning needs of employees working in MPs' offices. Four key initiatives were undertaken: consultations with party Whips' offices, a review of relevant academic literature, collaboration with other parliamentary institutions, and a series of interviews conducted with experienced caseworkers.

#### *Results*

Several insights emerged from these consultations:

First, the legal framework surrounding constituency work was found to be a foundational aspect of the role. In the absence of legislation defining what services MPs must provide, it is up to each Member of Parliament to determine the nature and scope of the assistance they offer, as well as how constituent information is managed. The protection of personal data is therefore paramount. To support this responsibility, the House of Commons provides standardized consent forms for the sharing of personal information, helping safeguard both citizens and constituency offices during case management (e.g., names, addresses, educational records, medical history, etc.). The Whips' offices repeatedly emphasized the importance of these legal considerations. Accordingly, the development team was expanded to include legal professionals from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, who advise MPs on such matters.

The second theme to emerge was the importance of networking. The development team met with colleagues from the British Parliament and took part virtually in Westminster-hosted sessions designed for constituency staff. These exchanges demonstrated a highly collaborative environment, marked by fluid sharing of best practices, tools, and lessons learned — even among staff from different political parties.<sup>6</sup>

Lastly, interviews with experienced staff shed light on the complexity of working conditions in constituency settings. These offices are often the first point of contact for citizens expressing frustration with federal services, particularly in areas such as immigration or passport delivery, over which staff have little control. This environment can lead to emotional strain, with employees facing pointed criticism, verbal confrontations, or even physical threats.

In remote regions, some offices operate with only one or two staff members, contributing to a profound sense of isolation, especially in comparison to the activity and attention concentrated on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Staff also reported facing pressure from constituents who, citing their electoral support, demand the resolution of issues beyond the office's purview. These stressors can contribute to notable staff turnover. As a result, the report recommended strengthening connections with Human Resources advisors to address concerns related to organizational structure, workplace culture, and mental health, and to refer certain cases to security services when warranted.

#### *Targeted Outcomes*

Following the analysis phase, three primary learning objectives were established to guide skills development throughout the casework training course:

- To define the scope and legal parameters of constituent casework.
- To apply key principles and techniques for collecting constituent information.
- To navigate the tools and resources available to address requests and challenges within constituency offices.

### **Design and Development of the Training Material**

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Once learning needs have been identified, the Learning Specialist sets about designing an initial plan, much like an architect drafting the first blueprint of a structure. To do so, they draw upon a “toolbox” of instructional techniques, which we will now explore.

### **Retention and Engagement**

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Retention of information and the effective application of acquired skills represent the true battleground of pedagogy<sup>7</sup>—a Gordian knot shaped by the conditions under which learning occurs. Two criteria are essential to meet this challenge: the quality of the information conveyed, and the repetition of that information.

To this end, the training material is built around a microlearning approach: content is digested, structured, and broken down into small units to avoid cognitive overload. Structuring content is akin to chopping vegetables into slices and cubes—a way to make an otherwise unwieldy quantity more digestible and cohesive. Accordingly, online modules offered by the House of Commons typically do not exceed 60 to 90 minutes in duration. This approach both supports information retention and accommodates the demanding pace of parliamentary work, which rarely allows for extended periods of disengagement.

To the educator’s skill in content design must be added the art of repetition, which necessarily requires active participant engagement. One might recall the metaphor of linguist Kató Lomb, who likened knowledge to a nail: *“If it is not driven in deep enough, it will give way under the slightest weight.”* Given the limitations of virtual formats—and the parliamentary context, which does not permit formal evaluation systems as found in academic institutions—it falls on the facilitator to foster engagement through interaction, notably via questions and activities. This is, in essence, a Socratic approach: continuous questioning designed to elicit responses from participants and connect new information to prior learning.

## Visual and Practical Learning

Often overlooked in instructional design is the use of visuals, which bolsters learning and plays a meaningful role in training, sometimes even contributing to the development of a distinct aesthetic in service of knowledge. Much like medieval scribes who adorned manuscripts to create a harmonious reading experience, visual design here becomes an empathetic, non-judgmental invitation for participants to engage more deeply with the material.

This pedagogical dimension naturally includes illustrations that help clarify key concepts. For instance, a constituency staff member may be called upon to perform a wide range of tasks throughout the day. A visual such as an “activity clock” can effectively depict the diversity of roles they take on beyond their formal job description: opening the office, organizing a local event, tidying the space, or offering a patient and empathetic ear to a frustrated constituent.

In the same spirit, the training is designed to be practical—for instance, it features a live demonstration of a research system, led by an Analyst from the Library of Parliament. This segment introduces participants to the available research tools and shows how to

Figure 4 – Excerpt from the Training Material: “A Typical Day in the Life of a Caseworker”



efficiently gather the information needed to respond to constituent inquiries. For example, participants learn how to identify funding programs for small and medium-sized businesses, or how to check the status of passport and immigration applications—two categories that emerged prominently during interviews as representing a significant share of requests received in constituency offices.

### **Implementation of the Course**

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Program implementation begins with preparing the team of experts who will deliver the training. As a first step, facilitators are invited to take part in a facilitation techniques workshop, offered through a Community of Practice—an initiative launched in 2022 within Human Resources. A tailored prep session follows, designed to meet the specific needs of the training. This session covers a range of facilitation methods as well as the logistical aspects of delivery: coordination among facilitators, division of learning content, and mastery of the material.

Since the session is delivered virtually, a refresher on the digital platform is also included. Facilitator notes—scripted or not—are provided to ensure consistency in messaging across sessions and to support facilitators in their preparation. Finally, a simulation or “dry run” is held to rehearse pacing and delivery, with mock participants posing questions and members of the learning team offering feedback.

Coordinating the annual training calendar at the House of Commons can be a genuine puzzle—a responsibility that lies primarily with the training coordinator. It requires careful consideration of MPs’ and staff schedules: sitting periods, committee work, caucus meetings, constituency events, and recess weeks all need to be taken into consideration. Added to this are learners’ language preferences and geographic locations, which can also affect timing.

While adjournment periods in the House of Commons typically offer legislative staff on Parliament Hill greater flexibility to participate in training, the opposite is true for constituency employees. During these periods, they are often engaged in coordinating local activities and supporting the Member’s presence in the riding. The development of training schedules must take these competing priorities into account in order to maximize client participation.

### **Evaluation of the Learning Product**

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Since the launch of the training on casework in September 2023, 269 Member’s employees have completed the course.<sup>8</sup> The program received an average satisfaction score of 4.6 out of 5. Several participants expressed appreciation for learning about tools available to support their work in constituency offices—resources that were previously unknown to them or only superficially understood (e.g., “*I really enjoyed learning what the Library could do for us [...] and where to find funding options.*”). Feedback also highlighted the significance of the legal aspects addressed during the training (e.g., “*It was helpful to learn what I can do as a caseworker and what I can’t do.*”). Finally, some attendees underscored the value of connecting with fellow staff in constituencies and the enrichment drawn from real-life examples and shared experiences (e.g., “*My favorite part was hearing from experienced caseworkers and how they handled difficult situations.*”).

### **Ongoing Development**

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In the field of instructional design, the lifecycle of a training program rarely exceeds three years. Beyond periodic updates, a full redesign is typically required, along with a fresh assessment of learning needs. A strong learning product is one that is evergreen—continuing to develop and adapt after its initial rollout.

For example, some participants have recommended the inclusion of additional modules on time management, as well as case study analysis related to newly introduced federal programs. The next phase of the project involves returning to the SAM model introduced earlier, and launching a new round of analysis. This includes a lessons-learned exercise with facilitators and subject-matter experts, followed by a thorough review of participant feedback. Additional interviews may also be conducted to stay attuned to the shifting realities of constituency offices.

Ultimately, the success of a training program cannot be measured solely by content retention. The greatest achievement of the Introduction to Casework course may lie in the fact that it now offers a forum for exchange and networking among constituency office employees (“*We had never received formal training on casework before.*”). Inspired by the British model we

had the opportunity to observe, the course provides a platform for exchange—a non-partisan space for dialogue that fosters interactions among colleagues. It is an opportunity to bring together individuals who are “in the same boat,” speak a common language and face similar challenges, *A Mari Usque Ad Mare*.

## Notes

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1. On this subject, we recommend consulting the studies by Peter MacLeod, published in the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*: “How to Organize a Constituency Office Effectively” (Spring 2006) and “The Constituency Project: Ten Years Later” (Summer 2014).
2. Historically, MPs could rely on rotating secretarial support on Parliament Hill for administrative tasks, while presence in the constituency was typically ensured by the Member themselves—or in some cases, their spouse—when the parliamentary calendar allowed them to return to their riding (Real House Lives: Former Members of Parliament on How to Reclaim Democratic Leadership, Samara Centre for Democracy, 2020, p. 52).
3. The figures cited here include all staff, whether hired on a short- or long-term basis, during the period from January 1 to December 31, 2024. Hiring peaks generally occur in May (the start of the fiscal year), at the beginning of a parliamentary session, or in the weeks following a general election.
4. House of Commons Debates, Hansard no. 166, volume 151, March 8 2023 (Routine Proceedings, 1620).
5. Composed of the Speaker and several members from both government and opposition, it meets approximately once a month to deliberate on budgets and administrative regulations governing internal House operations.
6. For historical context, see coverage from the article: “MPs divided on the idea of public funding of riding offices,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, April 3, 1973.
7. For the purposes of this article, we use the term pedagogy in its broadest sense, encompassing adult learning principles or andragogy, based on the definition provided by the Office québécois de la langue française.
8. As of July 1, 2025. The training programs offered by the House of Commons Administration are available on a self-serve basis, at the request of clients. The only mandatory training sessions are those required under the *Canada Labour Code*, focusing on harassment prevention as well as workplace health and safety.

# Redefining Legislative Compliance: Parliamentary Responses to the Supreme Court of Canada

How willing are Canadian legislatures to comply with the highest court in the land? In this article, which sheds new light on the legislative processes of creating *Charter*-driven policymaking, the authors provide a new operationalization and conceptualization to legislative compliance with the Supreme Court of Canada. Unlike previous studies of the courts, which have tended to focus on Parliament's ability to deviate from Supreme Court decisions, the authors build on existing literature to propose measuring compliance on a scale, ranging from non-compliance, to partial compliance, and compliance. By incorporating a measure of partial compliance, they account for the degrees of compliance with Court decisions, in which a legislative response may comply with part, but not all, of a Court decision. The authors, who find that legislatures partially comply with the courts at a high rate (44.7 per cent), conclude that the understanding of compliance is more nuanced than previously understood.

**Shauna Hughey, Anindita Ponkshe and Andrea Lawlor**

## Introduction

It is a rare occasion in Canadian politics for legislatures to openly disagree with courts. While an unsuccessful outcome in a major court case may generate a brief intervention by the Minister of Justice expressing dissatisfaction with a particular judicial outcome, outright criticism of the process or a refusal to implement the judiciary's ruling are virtually unthinkable in the Canadian context. This alignment between the institutions or parliament's adherence to court rulings, which is known as legislative compliance in the academic literature, is a hallmark of the largely harmonious relationship between courts and legislatures across the federation. It reflects not only a legal imperative (i.e. ensuring legislation is compliant with the constitution or operable with other legislation), but also a norm regarding how the branches of government should interoperate to ensure a functioning parliamentary system.

But this relative peace between a government and the judiciary does not mean there is a lack of friction in implementing court rulings that the government believes are orthogonal to its agenda.<sup>1</sup> There are, inevitably, occasions wherein legislators would prefer to challenge the court's interpretation of a law or not implement the required change. The reasons for this are myriad. Most obviously, when a court strikes down legislation (in whole or part) of the governing party, the government has a direct stake in the loss. But even in situations where the offending legislation is the product of a previous government (and governing party), governments are forced to confront the need for legislative change in a busy legislative environment. As such, legislative compliance may appear as the only choice, even when it places considerable resource stresses on the government.

Yet, on certain occasions, we have seen legislatures deviate from courts' rulings. For example, following *Canada v. Bedford* (2013), the Canadian Parliament passed legislation which contradicted the Supreme Court in criminalizing the purchase of sex and creating unsafe working conditions for sex workers. Similarly, following *R. v. Nur* (2015), Parliament reintroduced mandatory minimum sentences which were struck down by the Court. Thus, even if it is rare, we are forced to confront this concept of compliance (the norm) and deviation (the aberration), because deviation is so politically and legally significant.

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In this piece, we look at how to operationalize and measure legislative compliance to court decisions in the Canadian context with an eye to understanding how our system of judicial review and constitutional order can sometimes permit legislative deviation without falling into a state of parliamentary crisis. In short, we argue that legislative compliance is and should remain the norm, but that a (rare) case of legislative deviation, while politically significant and potentially upsetting to the inter-branch relationship, may reflect several democratic considerations (for example, public responsiveness) that do not cause a breakdown in the parliamentary system.

### **Legislative Compliance and Deviation**

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Legislative compliance and deviation from court decisions are underexplored concepts in the Canadian context, yet they highlight the critical interaction between parliaments and courts in the legislative process. These concepts are essentially two sides of the same coin – one that represents the responsiveness of legislatures to judicial authority. We often think of the traditional cycle of lawmaking as one where legislatures pass laws that are sometimes reviewed by courts for their constitutionality. In cases

where there is no finding of a constitutional breach, the legislation stands. However, where courts find unconstitutionality in the legislation, they have a menu of remedial choices, ranging from reading the legislation down to suspending it or striking it down altogether (amongst others). In response, the legislature can amend the legislation to fix the offending portion or repeal it. We consider this to be legislative compliance – what Kapiszewski and Taylor refer to as the “full execution of the action (or complete avoidance of the action) called for (or prohibited) in one or more court rulings.”<sup>2</sup>

Demonstrating how elected leaders comply with judicial rulings helps us understand judicial behaviour and, ultimately, the foundation of the rule of law. Governments that comply with court decisions are often thought to be following the required code of conduct in the separation of powers. Paulson defines compliance as the “acceptance of the judgement as final,”<sup>3</sup> while operationalizing it as a binary concept (complying or not). Yet, Kapiszewski and Taylor observe that most cases of compliance do not necessarily meet the bar of “full” compliance (or deviation), but may instead fall somewhere between, introducing variation into the concept.

By conceptualizing compliance as a continuous variable, rather than a binary, Kapiszweski and Taylor argue that governments are able to partially comply with the courts. These are cases in which the legislature adopts parts of a judicial decision.<sup>4</sup> There is, however, a theoretical challenge in determining what constitutes partial compliance. For example, a delay in implementing a decision could be representative of an unwillingness to comply with a judicial ruling, even if the outcome eventually complies with the Court.<sup>5</sup> In placing partial compliance on this continuous scale, we can introduce a degree of nuance in measurement.<sup>6</sup>

Across nations with independent judiciaries, we see compliance levels varying with the “democraticness” of the nation and levels of government accountability.<sup>7</sup> Yildırım et al. observe non-compliance with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and show that countries with more adherence to the rule of law and higher human rights scores, alongside strong judicial independence, are more likely to address and include remedies granted by the Commission.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, they note that countries with high levels of equality, protection of individual liberties, social class equality, and access to justice are more likely to comply with ECtHR decisions. In contrast, those with lower levels are more likely to deviate from court decisions and implement laws that are non-compliant even in the face of explicit statements from courts on the matter.<sup>9</sup>

Public opinion also drives compliance to some degree. This can be a product of the public’s support of the political party who finds themselves offside the court’s ruling, or in agreement with the court’s take on the issue itself. Driscoll et al. find that citizens’ tolerance for deviation depends on their political support for the incumbent government.<sup>10</sup> In authoritarian countries, citizens may consider it a norm to see government interference in judicial affairs, enhancing their tolerance towards legislative non-compliance. Some legislators may see the lack of compliance as a regular practice, and their views are largely unaffected by parliamentary deviation. Conversely, political support of courts or perceptions of judicial legitimacy may influence the likelihood of compliance. For example, Carlin et al. find that in Colombia, citizens consider deviation unacceptable.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of the vagueness in cases and/or the educational backgrounds of citizens, citizens find it difficult to excuse legislatures’ non-compliance from judicial rulings and do not see deviation as a norm.

Internationally, support for the institution and individual decisions has been shown to impact the willingness of public authorities to comply with a decision.<sup>12</sup> In states where the high court maintains a high degree of procedural fairness and transparency, citizens can pressure the legislature to comply as they have a higher degree of support for the court as an institution.<sup>13</sup> On the other side, citizen support for specific decisions increases political pressure on legislatures to comply with judicial outcomes.<sup>14</sup> Citizens’ levels of support for specific decisions is often driven by an ideological alignment with the decision.<sup>15</sup> Courts also have a role to play here. Stiansen finds that courts’ behaviour, particularly in assigning remedies, may promote either more or less compliance from legislatures, and plays a role in identifying the likelihood of deviation. By indicating clear remedies, courts can facilitate compliance with the legislature, as it becomes increasingly complex to delay compliance when clear instructions are provided, especially in nations where public support for courts is high.<sup>16</sup> Stiansen also notes that vagueness in a judgment may lead to initial inaction by governments, constituting a lack of timely compliance. Even controlling for levels of government accountability, there is evidence that clear remedial instruction can lead to a reduction in time to compliance. Therefore, courts providing remedial instructions are helpful not only for legislatures to adhere to judgments promptly but also in upholding the court’s autonomy and decision-making powers.

Still, despite predicting non-favourable outcomes for their laws, once judicial review is conducted and courts provide remedies to mitigate its unconstitutionality, legislatures may still stand by their law. While courts generally prefer to avoid clashes with the legislative and executive branches, legislatures may choose to pursue a law despite its unconstitutionality due to the firmness of its policy and political objectives. Schroeder finds that this type of deviation, despite warnings, demonstrates to courts that parliament is willing to uphold their law.<sup>17</sup> It also indicates that not all lawmakers in the legislative branch are risk-averse, and that they may be so committed to their policy objectives (or believe that the public will be on their side) that they are not concerned with the court striking down their laws.

Even though compliance is the norm, it remains undertheorized in the Canadian context. However, there are some useful starting points upon which we can draw. This debate was largely brought to the Canadian context by Hogg and Bushell,<sup>18</sup> who argue that there is a democratic dialogue between the courts

and legislatures in interpreting the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. In response, Morton argues that there is not a dialogue in rights interpretation between the courts and legislatures, as legislatures consistently comply with the courts, even though Parliament has the potential to deviate from the courts.<sup>19</sup> More recently, Emmett Macfarlane conducted an empirical analysis of legislative deviation from 1985 to 2009 and found that legislatures most often complied with or ignored the Court's decisions, and deviated in less than one-fifth of the cases under study. He argues that Canada functions as a system of judicial supremacy where the Court retains a high degree of interpretive power over the *Charter*.<sup>20</sup> Despite these low rates of non-compliance, there is a lack of conceptual clarity around why governments choose not to comply and how to measure the degree to which compliance (or non-compliance) occurs.

### Conceptualizing Compliance

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With this understanding in place, we can think about how to operationalize and measure compliance in Canada. While compliance matters to both the country's lower courts and high court, we largely confine our discussion to understanding federal and provincial legislative compliance with the Supreme Court of Canada's decisions, though we do suggest that these observations are generalizable to other courts in other jurisdictions.

Compliance is a conceptually messy idea, as court decisions are often unclear in the court's prescription or interpretation of legislation, thereby making it challenging to directly comply and implement the decision.<sup>21</sup> We use as our starting point Kapiszewski and Taylor's above-cited definition of compliance as the "full execution of the action (or complete avoidance of the action) called for (or prohibited) in one or more court rulings."<sup>22</sup> Previously, compliance was operationalized as a binary variable: compliance or non-compliance. Now, most of the literature accepts that compliance should be conceptualized on a scale ranging from compliance, partial compliance, and noncompliance.<sup>23</sup> Partial compliance refers to an "à la carte" form of compliance where public authorities choose some aspects of the court decision to comply with.<sup>24</sup> For example, following *R. v. Tse* (2012), the Court ruled that while an officer can intercept private communication in some circumstances, the lack of oversight in intercepting communication violates an individual's rights against unreasonable search and seizure under the *Charter* (s. 8). The federal government responded with *Bill C-55: An Act to Amend*

*the Criminal Code* and partially complied with the Court in stating that a police officer is still able to intercept the communication.<sup>25</sup> However, Parliament made no additional effort to comply with additional oversight to the process to protect the rights of the individual, as specified by the Court.

### Measuring Compliance

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Measuring compliance requires that the observer consider all the relevant variables that contribute to a government's likelihood to comply with a court's decision. These include supply-side considerations (e.g. information received from the court's ruling) and demand-side considerations (e.g. the legislature's goals and means). Kapiszewski and Taylor propose calculating an aggregate score of compliance based on four factors: (1) the measurements of the actors involved, (2) type of action, (3) timing, and (4) breadth of effect in both the judicial decision and subsequent response. Based on these scores, each judicial decision and its response is placed on a continuous scale of compliance, partial compliance, and noncompliance. We adapt this framework to account for the relevant institutional norms and considerations which influence compliance on both the judicial and legislative side in Canada. These include the remedial action as assigned by the court, the action requirement, the breadth of judicial decision, and the timing of the response. We discuss each category and measurement in greater detail below; however, we confine our analysis to the scope of this study to measure the compliance of legislatures, rather than compliance on the part of lower courts, administrative bodies, bureaucrats, and the executive, which are often included in the international study of compliance.

#### *Action: Remedial and Requirement*

Kapiszewski and Taylor's conceptualization of compliance includes scoring the dimension of the action required by the court and the action taken by the public authority. This includes all available actions of different political branches to implement the court's decision (i.e. damages, executive actions, and legislative responses). Because we are only concerned about legislative responses, and issuing damages or mandates targeting actions of non-legislative actors exceeds the scope of this study, we reorient this dimension to include the action on the side of the court when ruling on the constitutionality of a piece of legislation and the associated legislative action taken by parliament. This is broken down into two categories of action: the form of remedy issued, and the behavioural action required.

### *Remedial Action*

The form of remedial action refers to the remedy issued in the decision and how legislatures comply with it. In the Canadian case, the relevant remedies the Court can issue includes a declaration of invalidity, reading in, and reading down. On the legislative side, the scoring of this dimension is based on whether the legislative action was within or outside the scope of the remedy. Full compliance is defined as a legislative response where the legislature directly implements the judicial ruling within a reasonable time. Partial compliance is defined as any instance where the legislative branch implements some of a court decision, or it complies with a court decision after an extended period of time. For example, partial compliance includes cases where the Supreme Court issues an expansive declaration of invalidity and legislatures respond with a narrow response which does not fully address the declaration issued. On the other hand, if the Supreme Court of Canada reads down a specific section in legislation, and legislatures introduce a broader legislative amendment which exceeds the scope of the section, this would be classified as a case of partial compliance. Although this would in part comply with the Court's decision in the outcome reached, it would exceed the action prescribed by the Court. Non-compliance is defined as the legislative response not implementing any component of the Court decision and/or reinstating laws which were ruled to be inconsistent with the *Charter*.

### *Action Requirement*

The action requirement focusses on the legislative action requirement issued by the Court and the subsequent action or response by legislatures. Here, the Court may require the legislature to: (1) "Do something" – e.g. the legislature responds with a legislative amendment or repeal; (2) change behaviour – e.g. the legislature amends the law to introduce a new approach; (3) do not initiate behaviour – e.g. the Court rules that legislatures should not introduce new behaviour; (4) cease behaviour. – e.g. the legislature introduces legislation which ceases previous behaviour or ceases behaviour deemed unconstitutional by the Court; or (5) do nothing.<sup>26</sup> Compliance is reached when legislatures fulfill the action requirement outlined by the Court. Partial compliance is reached by legislatures introducing an action which is similar to what is prescribed by the Court or that only partially completes the prescribed action. For example, if the Court issues a decision on

several components of a law, if legislatures respond to some but not all of the decision, these would be cases of partial compliance. Non-compliance is when legislatures introduce an action that significantly deviates from the action prescribed by the Court.

To this, we add a further consideration: clarity from the court on the action required. In certain cases, the remedy issued in the court's decision is vague, and it is unclear how legislatures should comply with this decision. Cases are coded as compliant when the Court issues a vague decision, and the legislature changes its behaviour to align with the Court decision. Outside of this clear case of compliance, there are potentially other issues when the Court issues a vague decision. For example, cases where the government evaded or ignored the decision are coded as non-compliance when the Court mandates an action. When the action prescribed by the Court is vague, the government may agree with the Court and is choosing not to fill a legislative gap or find it is not necessary to fill this gap and is coded as partial compliance. Further, the action requirement is coded as partial compliance if the Court is vague in what legislatures should do as an action or its remedy. For example, if the court rules that the legislature should "do something" without a clear legislative action, and the legislature changes its behaviour, this is coded as partial compliance (even if we recognize that partial compliance may not be the legislature's fault).

### *Breadth*

Kapiszewski and Taylor's conceptualization of compliance includes the breadth of the judicial decision based on the precedent it set and its impact on the parties of the dispute. On the legislative side, the breadth dimension includes whether the action focussed on the parties of the dispute and the number of people reached by the public authority's action. Since we only consider the legislative response, the breadth and impact of the decision cannot be meaningfully measured in either the effect of the decision or the persons reached in the decision. However, on the legislative side, Kapiszewski and Taylor propose measuring whether the legislative response is reaching more, fewer, or the same number of people covered under the law. Since the only form of compliance we are examining is legislative compliance, the legislation is a federal or provincial response which applies to a high proportion of the population, rather than the individual parties in the case.

We adapt the breadth dimension to instead focus on the breadth of the judicial decision and response as it relates to the legislature. There are different degrees of magnitude of legislative change introduced in response to different decisions issued by the high court. Legislatures can introduce either a minor, moderate, or major legislative change in response to a court's decision. These changes can either comply with or deviate from the court decision, but these changes focus on the breadth of the legislative action in response to the decision. A case of minor non-compliance would include introducing a legislative change on a technicality or reintroducing the precise detail/wording of legislation which was found to be unconstitutional. This could include reintroducing a specification which was found to be incompatible/invalid or introducing a change in wording from the previous legislation. Moderate cases of non-compliance include incremental legislative developments to the law in line with previous legislation while introducing a new legislative framework that exceeds a minor technical change. The actions available to legislatures in moderate cases occur with a minor policy amendment but exceed a sole amendment to the wording of the impugned legislation. A case of moderate non-compliance would occur when legislatures introduce a new or revised legislative framework which deviates from the high court's ruling or reintroduces a legislative framework that was ruled by the court to be unconstitutional. Finally, a case of major non-compliance would include legislatures introducing legislation which deviates from the entirety of the narrative introduced by the high court or reintroducing legislation with the same narrative which the court did not focus on / agree with.

### Timing

Finally, we score each decision on the timing of the decision and the subsequent legislative response. It is commonly accepted that an extended period of time between a decision and the response decreases the quality of compliance.<sup>27</sup> For example, legislative change that comes in the six months following the decision, compared with 10 years on, is considered a much stronger form of compliance, while the latter can be questioned as to whether the legislative change is even in response to the court's decision. In shortening the period between the initial decision and the legislative response, this lends increased legitimacy to the legislative change as a response to the Court decision and therefore compliance.<sup>28</sup> We acknowledge, however, that while an unreasonable amount of time between the decision and legislative response signals the government's reluctance to comply with

a decision, there are relevant factors which may affect the government's capacity to immediately comply with a decision. For example, the timing of an election or legislative sittings could delay the immediate implementation of a court decision. Similarly, the complexity of the issue or other laws being examined in the courts at the same time may affect the timing of compliance.

### High Level Findings

While we do not examine all instances of legislative compliance here, we are able to provide a limited empirical examination of compliance to illustrate our suggested conceptualization. Drawing on a dataset of all *Charter* cases from 2000-2020, we measure and code all instances of legislative response to a total of 313 Supreme Court of Canada rulings on *Charter* challenges. Of the 313 cases, there were 38 cases of the Court issuing a declaration, reading-in, or reading down.

**Figure 1: Rates of Compliance Over Time**

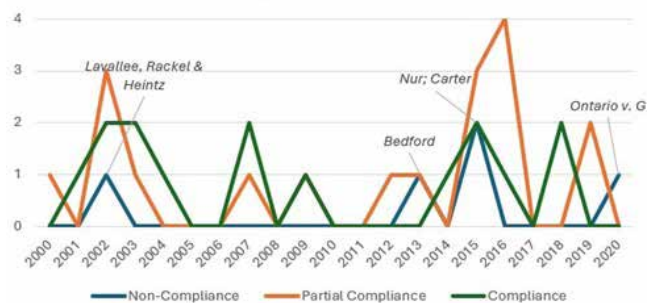


Figure 1 shows that most judicial rulings on *Charter* issues are met with high levels of compliance. In 86.8 per cent of cases, we see full or partial compliance, with legislatures rarely substantively deviating from the Court's decision. In response to cases where a relevant remedy was prescribed, legislatures fully complied in 42.1 per cent of cases (16 cases), partially complied in 44.7 per cent of cases (17 cases), and did not comply in 13.2 per cent of cases (5 cases).

Notably, these cases of non-compliance covered issues of medical assistance in dying (*Carter v. Canada* [2015]), sex work (*Canada v. Bedford* [2013]), mandatory minimum sentences (*R. v. Nur* [2015]), the sex offenders registry (*Ontario v. G* [2020]), and solicitor-client privileges (*Lavallee, Rackel & Heintz v. Canada* [2002]). All of these cases of non-compliance were in the area of criminal law and most presented

a controversial area of law. However, the cases of partial compliance were in response to a broad range of areas and were primarily technical legal issues. Five of these cases were in criminal law, focussing on issues such as denial of bail (*R. v. Hall* [2002]), search and seizure (*R. v. Tse* [2012]), possession of marijuana (*R. v. Smith* [2015]), sentencing (*R. v. K.R.J.* [2016]), and child luring (*R. v. Morrison* [2019]). The majority of these cases of partial compliance focussed on the administration of the criminal justice system. At the same time, the other cases of partial compliance were in more technical areas of law, such as civil, constitutional, electoral, administrative, and immigration. Of the cases of compliance, criminal and labour cases respectively composed 26.7 per cent of the cases, while the rest of the cases of compliance were in areas of administrative, civil, constitutional, and immigration law. The cases of criminal law focussed on the ability of an accused to stand trial due to a mental disability (*R. v. Demers* [2004]), early parole (*Canada v. Whaling* [2014]), bail and sentencing (*R. v. Safarzadeh-Markhali* [2016]), mandatory minimum sentences (*R. v. Lloyd* [2016]), and victim surcharges (*R. v. Boudreaault* [2018]). The labour cases focussed on the right to collective bargaining (*Mounted Police Association of Ontario v. Canada* [2015]), pay equality (*Quebec v. Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux* [2018]), the collection of personal data of striking employees (*Alberta v. United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 401* [2013]), or the ability for a union to strike (*Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan* [2015]). As with in the cases of partial compliance, the cases of strict compliance are in more technical areas of criminal law or focus on uncontroversial areas of policy.

It is notable that we observe higher levels of partial compliance, which introduces a higher degree of variability in the legislative response compared to Macfarlane's previous study on legislative deviation. By incorporating a gradation of measuring compliance on a three-point scale, this operationalization allows for a more nuanced understanding of both the types of compliance with the Court, and the frequency of this "à la carte" compliance. Legislatures continue to align themselves with the Court's ruling, but adopting a scale of compliance shows that legislatures will not fully align their legislative responses with the Court. Although the rate of non-compliance aligns with previous studies (fewer than one-fifth of cases),<sup>29</sup> the rate of partial compliance sheds new light on the variety of legislative responses to Supreme Court decisions and legislatures' willingness to strictly comply with the Court.

## Studying Compliance in the Future

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This study, while brief, represents a first attempt to import the logic and conceptualization of legislative compliance and deviation to the Canadian context. While previous work, such as that of Macfarlane and Morton make critical observations about the likelihood of parliamentary non-compliance from the courts' rulings and the norms around which the legislative-judicial relationship has been built, there remains considerable room to improve our understanding of when and why legislatures choose to deviate from judicial decisions. This article represents an essential first step in that empirical project.

We suspect that reasons for non-compliance are manifold and often highly political. Non-compliance may be more likely to occur around issues where there is an observable or pronounced gap between public opinion and the court's opinion (e.g. in *R. v. Brown* where the SCC restored an Alberta man's acquittal for attacking a woman while in a state of automatism), around issues where government has promised either in a campaign or budget a policy outcome that is incongruent with the court's ruling, or in instances where the court is striking down instances of the government's own legislative agenda (as opposed to a statute passed by a previous government – co-partisan or out-partisan). On the surface, we see too few cases on rights-related decisions to show systematic evidence of this reasoning, but there may be sufficient qualitative evidence to suggest that such patterns exist. This is a fruitful area for future research.

While our study excludes compliance by administrative bodies, the Court's impact on policy and subsequent rates of compliance can extend well beyond the legislative sphere. Our contribution here is to make a case for a more systematized way to measure legislative compliance. Though rare, legislative non-compliance is a critical action on behalf of legislatures because it represents an upending of the classical understanding of the separation of powers. On its face, it may provoke consternation in some quarters. Legislatures which routinely flout the courts rulings are certainly operating outside of the bounds set out for them in the separation of powers. However, non-compliance – in the rare instances that we see here – may be reflective of something else far less insidious to the practice of democracy. When done with a credible reasoning, the legislature's choice to deviate from judicial decisions, in whole or in part, may represent

a type of public responsiveness that is consistent with democratic practice. Of course, like many things, such reasoning exists within narrow bounds that must be carefully delineated because they are far too easy to push. Consequently, it is critical to understand how to measure legislative compliance, so we collectively share a common definition of when these phenomena are happening. This allows the academic and legal community to be more clear-eyed if and when governments push their discretion too far.

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# The Canadian Scene

## 61<sup>st</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Canadian Regional Conference

More than 80 delegates took part in the 2025 CPA Canadian Regional Conference hosted by the Assemblée nationale du Québec. The week-long event, which included the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians' (CWP) Canadian Regional Conference, brought together attendees from all federal, provincial, and territorial parliaments, in addition to special guests from CPA Headquarters, and parliamentarians from Scotland and Wales.

## CWP Canadian Regional Conference

Following the CWP Steering Committee meeting on July 20, CWP delegates gathered in the Assemblée nationale du Québec's salle du Conseil législatif on July 21 for the official opening of the proceedings.

After **Nathalie Roy**, President of the Assemblée nationale du Québec and **Lucie Lecours**, Québec Branch Representative for the CWP Steering Committee – Canadian Region and the Member for Les Plaines welcomed attendees to the provincial capital, CWP Chair **Susan Leblanc** provided an update on activities that took place over the previous year.



Collection Assemblée nationale du Québec

Above: Nathalie Roy, President of the Assemblée nationale du Québec, welcomes delegates to the 61<sup>st</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Canadian Regional Conference. Below: Members of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians' (CWP) Canadian Regional steering committee.



Collection Assemblée nationale du Québec



Collection Assemblée nationale du Québec

### CPA Canadian Regional Conference delegates.

The first conference session dealt with women speakers of parliaments. Moderated by Ms. Leblanc, attendees heard reflections from Nova Scotia Speaker **Danielle Barkhouse**, New Brunswick Speaker **Francine Landry**, Ms. Roy, and Ontario Speaker **Donna Skelly**.

A second session examined work-family balance at the Assemblée nationale and included a video presentation of a unique documentary produced by the Assemblée's studio: *Équilibre*. The film features a number of current and former MNAs who are parents, and is available on the Assemblée nationale du Québec's YouTube channel and Le Canal television channel.

The final session of the day consisted of a workshop on combatting harassment in parliament. Presenters from the Assemblée nationale included **Frantz Benjamin**, vice-president and chair of Comité Zéro harcèlement, **Sofia Jabrane**, Commissioner for Respect, and **Anik Laplante**, Director, Secrétariat général adjoint à l'administration, du Vivre-ensemble et de la prévention du harcèlement.

### CPA Canadian Regional Conference

On July 22, Ms. Roy welcomed additional conference delegates at the Assemblée nationale's Agora for the main conference's opening ceremonies, which included a rousing performance of several popular Québécois folk songs by a youth choir.

The first sessions consisted of brief jurisdictional reports from all CPA Canadian Regional branches and reports from **Jarvis Matiya**, CPA Deputy Secretary-General and Director of Operations, and **Jeffrey Hyland** Editor of *The Parliamentarian* and CPA Communications Manager.

Highlights from the jurisdictional reports included:

- A record 17 women MLAs (representing 35 per cent of New Brunswick's Assembly) being elected during a recent general election.
- Manitoba Premier **Wab Kinew** giving a speech to the Assembly in Cree, which Speaker Tom Lindsey heralded as "another small step on our path to reconciliation."



Collection Assemblée nationale du Québec

The third conference session, which examined elected representatives' responsibilities in the Digital Age, included a presentation by two members of Quebec's special committee on screens (MNAs Suzanne Trembley and Elizabeth Prass).

- More than 7,000 people responding to consultations by Quebec's special commission on the impact of screens on the development of young people.

The second conference session explored parliamentarians' role in protecting human rights. After showing a segment of a video describing Ontario's efforts to tackle human trafficking, Ms. Skelly introduced three police officers from Quebec to offer their insights into the matter. They reported that maintaining communications among police across the country and internationally was important since victims are frequently trafficked across borders. They also reported that the typical victim is not whom you might expect and that language barriers are significant (as pimps transport French-speaking victims to English-speaking provinces to further isolate them).

Senator **Kristopher Wells** spoke about protecting human rights at a time of political backlash. Focusing on the 2SLGBTI+ community, Senator Wells highlighted how social media is dividing, polarizing and inciting us with "angry algorithms" and "manufactured outrage." He explained that political scientists are

increasingly finding that political polarization is not due to policy disagreements, but rather opinions and emotions (for example, tribal conflict). Senator Wells suggested this polarization is a threat to democracy as people who are polarized are more likely to vote in low turnout elections like riding nominations, giving them an outsized role in the results.

A third session examined elected representatives' responsibilities in the Digital Age. Two members of Quebec's special committee on screen time, MNAs **Suzanne Trembley** and **Elizabeth Prass**, discussed the committee's work. The Assemblée nationale employs special committees of 10-12 members to investigate complex social issues in our lives. They are temporary in nature, autonomous, and sovereign in their mandate.

Ms. Trembley reported that the committee opted to look at screen time and screen time control measures, access to social media and video games, addiction mechanisms, cyberbullying, advertising aimed at young people, and minors having access to pornography, among other matters.

Ms. Prass outlined some of the special committee's 56 recommendations, including:

- Prioritizing physical infrastructure (basketball courts, skate parks, etc.) to provide alternative recreational options to children
- closer supervision of e-sports.
- setting 14 as a minimum age for social media use and prohibiting selling of personal information and profiling of people under the age of 14.
- Prohibiting paid loot box and microtransactions in video games
- Regulating advertising aimed at young people
- A coordinated effort with federal government and other federated bodies to regulate age verification which would restrict access to pornography

Senator **Andrew Cardozo** offered thoughts on social media and its impact on politics. He explained the differences between online news media and social media (a free-for-all), but noted that audience and advertising has shifted online. In this new media landscape, Senator Cardozo compared increasing fragmentation online to shopping – with department stores declining in favour of stores with narrow product lines.

Expressing concern that some municipal councils have no media coverage whatsoever, he noted that older media receiving government funding would disappear within months if it were ended. Although there has been criticism that media receiving funding would be biased towards government, he contended that independent media is necessary to keep politicians and governments accountable. He proposed an independent media fund that would be at arm's-length from the government, and putting more government advertising funds into Canadian media organizations.

MP **Iqra Khalid** discussed how misinformation and disinformation distorts public understanding and increases distrust in democratic institutions, but that its spread online (and particularly on social media) is outpacing any type of regulation governments can place on this industry. Nevertheless, Ms. Khalid outlined some recommendations from a committee that examined this topic, including:

- enhanced regulation of cross border data transfers
- increased funding for digital literacy
- a code of practice on disinformation
- enhanced powers for the privacy commissioner
- stronger digital security for government devices
- modernized legislation
- more robust education

A fourth session, held on July 23, brought together presenters who discussed disabilities and parliamentary life and how removing obstacles strengthened inclusion.

Mr. Hyland recounted how former Nova Scotia Speaker Kevin Murphy spearheaded the initiative to create the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) group. Established in 2018, it currently has about 60 registered members from 25 legislatures out of 18,000 parliamentarians in 180 legislatures. Fostering the growth of the group has not always been easy, however. Specific challenges include different definitions of disabilities, different terminologies, and different ways of recording data of members. Mr. Hyland noted that the CPA has used a capital investment fund to assist legislatures who seek to build infrastructure such as ramps and accessible washroom facilities.

MP **Alexandra Mendès** outlined the *Accessible Canada Act*. With a stated goal to create a barrier-free Canada by 2040, the *Act* applies to the federally regulated private sector and Crown corporations and Parliament. She offered some details on the House of Commons' accessibility plan, which includes Web content, guidelines and resources for equitable hiring practices, assistive technology.

Member of Scottish Parliament **Pam Duncan-Glancy** recounted her journey into politics as a person with a disability (an aggressive autoimmune condition). "Representation doesn't happen by accident," she explained, "you do it by design. If we see equality as treating everyone the same, then I (as a person in a wheelchair) get stuck at the bottom of the staircase." Ms. Duncan-Glancy suggested that "positive action," also known as "affirmative action," is necessary to open doors to disadvantaged groups whose underrepresentation in parliaments and public life perpetuates the very system that creates barriers to full participation. She complimented her hosts, stating that the *Assemblée nationale* is one of the most accessible spaces she has visited, not only in terms of physical barriers, but also attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Ms. Duncan-Glancy also expressed interest in the GoodMaps app being developed by the House of Commons because it tells users about a location's accessibility. She said that if she knows a place is not accessible, it affects her decision about where to go.

In the fifth conference session, MP **Stephanie Kusie** provided a case study in "the overhaul that

never happened.” Explaining that a dramatic shift in voting intentions in the months leading up to the 2025 federal election dashed her hope that she would trade in her role as a shadow cabinet critic for control of the portfolio, Ms. Kusie discussed what changes she would have made as Treasury Board Minister, including focusing on the mechanism of government by overhauling the organization of accounts.

In the sixth session, BC Speaker **Raj Chouhan** spoke about the procedure involved when a presiding officer must cast a tie-breaking vote. Following his re-election as Speaker after the last general election there was an even number of government and opposition MLAs seated in the Assembly. During the last week of the most recent session, there were 11 votes where he cast the deciding ballot, two of which were at third reading. Parliamentary convention is for Speaker to vote in a way that allows debate to continue; however, some Speakers have opted to vote according to their conscience or even along the line of the political party under whose banner they were elected. Speaker Chouhan provided a case study of involving Bills 14 and 15 in BC’s Assembly. Both bills were extensively debated and studied and amendments were repeatedly defeated by presiding officers casting tie-breaking ballots during second reading. But, on third reading, the bills were defined as votes of confidence. To cast a ballot against these bills, the government would fall.

On the final day, a special session on Canada-US relations was convened. **Christophe Cloutier-Roy**, the deputy director of the Observatoire sur les États-Unis de la Chaire Raoul-Dandurand, explained that although there had been concern about the threat of an invasion or annexation of Canada dating from the time of the American Revolution, since the 1930s there has been no plan in the U.S to invade Canada, and instead an asymmetrical and complex interdependence based on trade, defence, and energy has developed.

Although many transnational actors want to maintain this relationship, during the second Trump Presidency there has been renewed hostility at the highest levels of political leadership, and as a result there is a new urgency in re-evaluating the current interdependence paradigm.

**Geneviève Dufour**, a professor of law specializing in international trade law at the University of Ottawa focused on the judicial side of the current trade dispute. She explained that President Trump’s statements about how tariffs are applied to supply management sectors are wrong. While the President has used ‘national safety’ to justify his tariffs, courts have ruled that this is not a proper or legal justification. However, as a political actor who has not demonstrated respect for the rule of law, Ms. Dufour questioned what will happen if he ignores a ruling from a trade panel. If Canada multiplied tariffs in response, would we risk waking up the beast? Ms. Dufour argued that we should negotiate, try to gain time, and try to show we’re nice players. Although diversifying Canada’s trading partners is a long-term solution, it should not become the be-all and end-all solution. In the short-term, she suggested that removing internal barriers to trade in our country could help reduce our dependence on the United States.

Luc Laliberté, a historian, columnist and political analyst, reviewed what President Trump has learned from his influences and advisors, including Roy Cohn and Steve Bannon, and how his playbook is to flood the zone. Mr. Laliberté offered some strategies to combat this tactic, such as reaching out to state governors and others, hoping things will get better once President Trump leaves in 2028, and remaining united in the face of an external threat.

**Will Stos**

Editor, Canadian Parliamentary Review

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Francine Landry, Speaker

Shayne Davies, Secretary

### **SASKATCHEWAN**

Todd Goudy, Speaker

Iris Lang, Secretary

### **NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

Paul Lane, Speaker

Kim Hawley George, Secretary

### **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

Shane Thompson, Speaker

Glen Rutland, Secretary

### **NUNAVUT**

David Joanasie, Speaker

Stephen Innuksuk, Secretary

### **YUKON**

Jeremy Harper, Speaker

Dan Cable, Secretary



\*As of November 20, 2025

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# New and Notable Titles

A selection of recent publications relating to parliamentary studies prepared with the assistance of the Library of Parliament (June 2025 – September 2025).

“Hansard – The nation’s note-takers.” *Economist* 456 (9463): 18. August 30, 2025.

- Putting democracy on the record.

Clarence, Julian. “The Democratic Deficit of Executive Federalism: Where Are the Parliaments?” *Journal of Parliamentary and Political Law / Revue de droit parlementaire et politique* 19 (2): 293- June/juin 2025.

- Intergovernmental relations in federal States are predominantly driven by executives, with negotiations often occurring behind closed doors, thereby sidelining parliaments. This phenomenon, widely known as ‘executive federalism,’ reflects a lack of political accountability as traditional parliamentary oversight organs and mechanisms prove largely ineffective. This article investigates the democratic deficit in intergovernmental relations by addressing the following question: Where are the parliaments?

Davies, Graeme A.M., Sarah Shair-Rosenfield, Reed M. Wood, and Rob Johns. “Responding to Online Threats Against MPs: Freedom of Speech or Regulation?” *Political Insight* 16 (3): 8-12 September 2025.

- How far should government and social media companies go in tackling online threats against politicians? The authors report on new research that finds strong public support for action.

Feldman, Charlie. “Correcting Bills before the Legislature: A Canadian Perspective.” *Journal of Parliamentary and Political Law / Revue de droit parlementaire et politique* 19 (2): 401- June/juin 2025.

- While the vast majority of changes to a bill’s text can be attributed to recorded decisions made by legislators, some Canadian legislatures authorize their Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel to make textual modifications through administrative means in specific circumstances...To explore this topic in the Canadian context, this paper will briefly discuss the case for corrective powers before surveying the various powers that find explicit expression in the standing orders (or equivalent) of Canada’s Houses of Parliament and provincial legislatures.

Flemming, Tom. “Reviewing the [UK] Modernisation Committee’s first year.” *The Constitution Unit* 5p., July 24, 2025.

- This week marks a year since the House of Commons established a new Modernisation Committee. In this post, the author reviews the committee’s first year.

Kelly, Hannah, Lisa James, and Meg Russell. “[UK] House of Commons procedure: why does it matter and how does it change?” *The Constitution Unit* 7p., July 8, 2025.

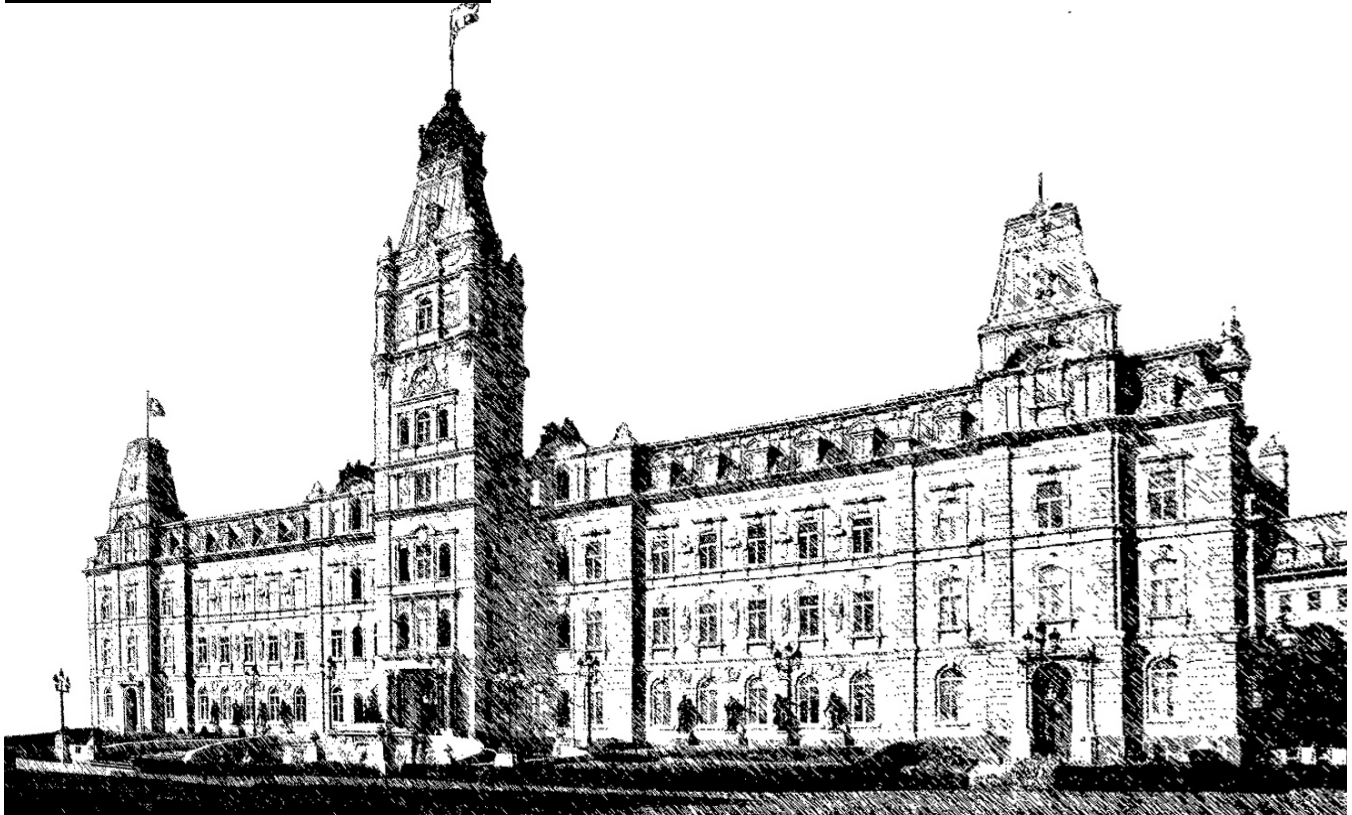
- House of Commons procedure combines formal rules with conventions and precedents, providing the framework for conducting business and making decisions. The authors explain why it matters, how it evolves, and what future changes have been proposed.

Renwick, Alan. “[UK] Government plans for electoral reform are a welcome start, but contain one surprising and serious error of judgement.” *The Constitution Unit*: 6p., September 12, 2025.

- Over the summer, ministers published plans for extensive electoral reforms. The headline proposal is the reduction of the voting age to 16. A raft of other measures will affect voter registration, campaign finance, election administration, and the role of the Electoral Commission. In this post, the author argues that much of what the government proposes is good. But the newly appointed set of ministers responsible for elections policy will need to make further progress on some crucial matters.

Rowe, Malcolm. “The Unwritten Constitution: A Short Description.” *Journal of Parliamentary and Political Law / Revue de droit parlementaire et politique* 19 (2) : 271- June/juin 2025.

- ...what is poorly understood is that the largest part of our constitution is unwritten; it consists of the Westminster model of government that we received from the United Kingdom.



## Québec

### Proceedings of the Assemblée nationale

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#### *Composition*

On June 19, 2025, **Marwah Rizqy**, Member for Saint-Laurent, was appointed Leader of the Official Opposition (Quebec Liberal Party), to replace **Marc Tanguay**, Member for LaFontaine. On June 26, **Michelle Setlakwe**, Member for Mont-Royal–Outremont, was named Official Opposition House Leader; **Frédéric Beauchemin**, Member for Marguerite-Bourgeoys, Deputy House Leader; **André Fortin**, Member for Pontiac, Chief Official Opposition Whip; and **Filomena Rotiroti**, Member for Jeanne-Mance–Viger, Caucus Chair. These changes follow the election of **Pablo Rodriguez** – who is not an MNA – as leader of the Quebec Liberal Party.

In addition, the Member for Vaudreuil, **Marie-Claude Nichols**, returned to the Official Opposition Caucus on June 19. Consequently, the Assemblée nationale is now composed of 124 Members: 86 from the Coalition avenir Québec, 20 from the Quebec Liberal Party, 12 from Québec solidaire and five from the Parti québécois, as well as one independent Member. The seat for Arthabaska is vacant.

#### *Budget process*

On April 10, 2025, the Assemblée rejected 27 motions stating a grievance that were moved by Members in opposition over the course of the debate on the budget speech. The Assemblée then carried the Minister of Finance’s motion that the Assemblée approve the Government’s budgetary policy. On May 22, 2025, the budget process was completed with concurrence in the reports from the committees that had examined the budget estimates and then passage of the appropriation bill.

#### *Legislative agenda*

Between April 1, 2025, and the end of the sessional period on June 7, 2025, 34 bills were introduced in the Assemblée, including 12 private Members’ bills and six private bills. During the same period, 21 bills were passed, including four private bills and five private Members’ bills to amend the names of their sponsors’ ridings. The following are some of the bills passed:

- Bill 83, *An Act to foster the practice of medicine in the public health and social services network*, which in particular requires all new doctors to participate in the public system for five years before they can practice in the private sector;
- Bill 84, *An Act respecting integration into the Québec*

nation, which establishes the Québec model of national integration to ensure the vitality and preservation of Québec culture;

- Bill 89, *An Act to give greater consideration to the needs of the population in the event of a strike or a lock-out*, which in particular aims to maintain certain services required to ensure the population's social, economic or environmental security; and
- Bill 91, *An Act establishing the Unified Family Tribunal within the Court of Québec*, which aims to facilitate the judicial process for Québec families.

### *Extraordinary sitting*

At the request of Premier **François Legault**, the Assemblée met for an extraordinary sitting on Friday, June 6, 2025, to introduce an exceptional legislative procedure for completion of the consideration of Bill 69, *An Act to ensure the responsible governance of energy resources and to amend various legislative provisions*. The bill, introduced exactly one year earlier, was then at the committee stage.

The sitting began at 3 p.m. and ended at approximately 5 a.m. the next morning, some 14 hours later. The bill was passed on the following vote: Yeas 67, Nays 32, Abstentions 0.

### *Statement from the Chair regarding decorum*

At the sitting of April 3, 2025, **Nathalie Roy**, President of the Assemblée nationale, suspended Question Period for some 30 minutes. She met with the parliamentary group leaders and, when the proceedings resumed, made a statement regarding the observance of the Standing Orders and the maintaining of decorum by all MNAs.

### *Motion to amend the Constitution Act, 1867*

On April 22, 2025, **Simon Jolin-Barrette**, Minister Responsible for Canadian Relations, moved a motion to replace section 98 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* so that Québec superior court judges would be selected on the recommendation of the Québec government. According to the wording of the motion, the amendment may be made by proclamation issued by the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada where so authorized by resolutions of the Assemblée nationale, the Senate and the House of Commons in accordance with section 43 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The motion was carried unanimously.

## *The privileges of Parliament and the conduct of its Members*

### *Ruling from the Chair*

On April 2, 2025, the President ruled on the admissibility of a point of privilege or contempt raised by **Monsef Derraji**, Official Opposition House Leader, concerning the submission of documents containing erroneous information about the CASA/SAAQ clic project to members of the Committee on Public Administration.

In her ruling, the President did not draw any conclusions regarding the role played by the five persons referred to in the Official Opposition House Leader's notice, all of whom had at various times held important positions at the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ). As the jurisprudence recognizes, in such circumstances, only an inquiry can determine the roles, powers and responsibilities of the many persons involved. However, the facts brought before the Chair were deemed sufficiently serious to constitute *prima facie* contempt of Parliament concerning the SAAQ itself, which is a state-owned enterprise. According to the facts brought to the President's attention, not only did the SAAQ provide false information to the Committee on Public Administration, but it appears to have done so intentionally. The point of privilege was ruled admissible.

Due to its length, the ruling is not reproduced in full here, but is available in the *Journal des débats de la Assemblée nationale* of April 2, 2025, pp. 9111–9115 (French only).

On April 8, 2025, to follow up on the ruling, the Official Opposition House Leader moved two motions: one to recognize the breach of rights and privileges and the other to mandate the Committee on the National Assembly to inquire into the matter and recommend, if applicable, appropriate sanctions. Both motions were defeated, thereby concluding the point of privilege.

### *Report from the Committee on the National Assembly on a point of contempt*

On May 21 and 28, 2025, the Committee on the National Assembly held deliberative meetings within the framework of the inquiry arising from the motion moved by the Official Opposition House Leader on January 30, 2025. The meetings concerned the failure to table, within the prescribed time, the 2023 annual

management report of the SAAQ. On May 29, 2025, the President tabled the report of the Committee, of which she is also the Chair.

The report states that there is no reason to conclude that contempt of Parliament occurred. However, the Committee reiterated how important it is for parliamentarians to have timely access to all information concerning government departments and public bodies, which must be provided to them by ministers and chief executive officers of public bodies under Québec law. The report also states that if there is a delay the government departments and public bodies must provide explanations to the minister responsible, before the deadline expires, so that the latter may inform the Assemblée nationale. After debate, the report was adopted on June 5, 2025.

#### *Private ruling from the Chair*

On the same day that the above-mentioned report was tabled, the President tabled a private ruling. Since there are very few precedents in which the procedure relating to the privileges of Parliament and the conduct of its Members has been completed, and as the Standing Orders are not very explicit in such matters, the President wanted to explain in concrete terms the steps to be taken following the tabling of the Committee on the National Assembly's report. The ruling specifies how the consideration of the report is to be carried out and the possible steps to be taken following the adoption of the report. The report is sessional paper number 2614-20250529 (French only) and is available among the documents tabled on May 29, 2025.

#### *Other events*

##### *Exhibition entitled Pierre Fortin: mission Saint-Laurent*

From April 8 to December 7, 2025, the Assemblée nationale's reception pavilion will feature an exhibition on a unique former MNA and Speaker (President): **Pierre Fortin**. He was a visionary physician, schooner commander and politician, as well as a staunch defender of the coastal communities of the Fleuve Saint-Laurent. Through an immersive exhibition designed by the Musée de la Gaspésie in collaboration with the Assemblée nationale du Québec, the Musée de la Mer and the Musée de la Côte-Nord, the exhibition presents Pierre Fortin's commitment to justice, maritime sovereignty and the protection of natural resources.

##### *Le Parlementaire restaurant recommended in the Michelin Guide*

Le Parlementaire, the Assemblée nationale's restaurant, was recently featured in the prestigious Michelin Guide, in the Selected Restaurants category. The Guide placed a total of 15 restaurants in the Capitale-Nationale region in this category. Le Parlementaire is open to the public, even during periods when the Members are not sitting.

##### *Équilibre: a documentary on balancing political and family life in Québec*

To shine a spotlight on the challenges facing parliamentarians who try to balance politics and parenthood, the Assemblée's studio has produced a unique documentary: *Équilibre*. It features a number of current and former MNAs who are parents, and is available on the Assemblée nationale du Québec's YouTube channel and Le Canal television channel.

## **Committee Proceedings**

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### *Bills*

The end of the spring 2025 sessional period was especially busy for the parliamentary committees. Between April and June, the committees carried out special consultations on nine bills and clause-by-clause consideration of 19 government bills, for a total of approximately 345 hours of work.

The Committee on Institutions completed clause-by-clause consideration of five bills intended to replace the names of certain ridings. The Acts provide that the changes they establish have the same effect as if they had been made by the Commission de la représentation électorale. The ridings concerned are Arthabaska, Laporte, Matane-Matapédia, Rivière-du-Loup-Témiscouata and Vimont. The proposed changes to the names of the electoral divisions are to take effect on the day the current legislature ends.

The Committee on Institutions also completed clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 98, *An Act to amend the Election Act mainly to preserve the integrity of the electoral process*. The purpose of the bill is, among other things, to make pre-election expenses, in particular publicity expenses, more transparent, whether they are incurred by political parties or by third parties. It also makes anyone who knowingly disseminates false information to influence the results of an election or to compromise public trust in election proceedings liable

to a fine. Lastly, the bill introduces an obligation for political parties to present at least two candidates in every general election, on pain of their authorization being withdrawn.

### *Examination of the 2025–2026 estimates of expenditure*

The committees examined the 2025–2026 budget estimates between April 29 and May 8, 2025. During the two weeks devoted to this mandate, no other business could be considered in parliamentary committee.

### **Accountability**

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On May 26, 2025, the Committee on Public Administration (CAP) heard the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and three integrated health and social services centres on Chapter 2 of the Auditor General’s May 2023 report entitled “Octroi de contrats de gré à gré : en vertu du décret d’urgence sanitaire, ou pour obtenir des places d’hébergement et de la main-d’œuvre indépendante” (Awarding untendered contracts: Under public health emergency orders, or to obtain residential and long term care beds and independent labour). The hearing was held completely virtually, in accordance with Standing Order 117.7.1, which provides that the CAP’s proceedings may take place virtually, by decision of the steering committee.

### *Select Committee on the Impacts of Screens and Social Media on Young People’s Health and Development*

On May 29, 2025, after a year’s work, the Select Committee on the Impacts of Screens and Social Media on Young People’s Health and Development tabled its final report in the Assemblée nationale du Québec. The report contains 56 recommendations on a wide range of subjects, including prevention, awareness-raising, the use of digital tools in the classroom, regulation of social media, ads targeting young people and intergovernmental cooperation.

Key recommendations include establishing a minimum age for creating and using social media accounts. On April 22, 2025, the Committee also tabled an interim report recommending that the Government ban the use of cell phones in all primary and secondary schools from the start of the next school year. Certain exceptions are provided in the report, which also recommends that the Ministère de l’Éducation support schools in implementing this ban. After the tabling of the Committee’s report, the Minister of Education, Bernard Drainville, announced that the proposed ban

would apply from the start of the next school year.

In addition, as part of its proceedings, the Committee held two rounds of special consultations, which provided an opportunity to hear 66 individuals and organizations. It also visited 17 elementary and secondary schools in 13 different cities and towns, and carried out an online consultation that allowed 7,075 respondents to express their views, setting a record for participation in an online consultation carried out by the Assemblée nationale.

The Committee, created by a motion carried unanimously on June 6, 2024, was dissolved following the tabling of its final report.

**Olivier Champagne**

Direction de la séance et de la procédure parlementaire

**Roxanne Guévin**

Direction des commissions parlementaires



## **The Senate**

### **Chamber, Procedure and Speaker’s Rulings**

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The Forty-fifth Parliament began proceedings on May 26, and King **Charles III** delivered the Speech from the Throne in the Senate Chamber on May 27. Later that day, an address thanking His Majesty the King was adopted. The 12 senators summoned between December 2024 and March 2025 (biographical information provided in earlier issues) were introduced over the course of this week.

On May 29, the Speaker made a statement regarding the process for the election of the Speaker pro tempore. Candidates were announced on June 3 and addressed the Senate, after which senators had the opportunity to vote until one hour after adjournment on June 4. On June 5, the Speaker announced the results of

the election, declaring Senator **René Cormier** the successful candidate.

On June 4, a motion containing several provisions governing business for the session was adopted, the full text of which is found in the *Journals of the Senate* of that date. The motion contained provisions relating to Wednesday adjournment time and the time at which the Senate sits on Thursdays. It also included provisions regarding Question Period, covering the frequency, selection process and the length of Question Periods with a minister of the Crown, as well as time limits on questions and responses for regular Questions Periods. Various provisions regarding Senate committees were also included, making the Committee of Selection a standing committee for the session, authorizing committees under certain circumstances to meet while the Senate is sitting on Tuesdays at the later of 6:30 p.m. or the end of Government Business, and outlining authorities regarding the membership of certain committees and subcommittees. Finally, the motion contained provisions regarding joint committees and their authority to hold hybrid meetings or meetings entirely by videoconference. Upon the adoption of the motion, a message was sent to the House of Commons to acquaint them of the provisions relating to joint committees.

The Senate adopted a motion on June 12 to appoint **Julie Wellington** as Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the Senate, effective July 17.

On June 12, the Senate adopted a motion to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole at the start of each sitting on June 16, 17 and 18 to hear from ministers and other witnesses with regard to the subject matter of Bill C-5, *An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act*. The motion also contained provisions authorizing a process for booking witnesses during the committees and outlining the programming of all legislative stages if the Senate received a message from the House of Commons regarding the bill.

On June 17, a motion was adopted authorizing senators to table documents, notwithstanding rule 14-1 and only until June 25, relating to the subject matter of Bill C-5 when the Speaker called for the Tabling of Documents.

Senator **Marilou McPhedran** rose on a point of order on June 25 during debate on Bill C-5, with respect to the voting process. She pointed out that the other place had, pursuant to its Standing Orders, split the final

vote on the bill into two parts and asked that there be consideration for the same process in the Senate. Later in the sitting Speaker **Raymonde Gagné** ruled that there are no provisions in the *Rules of the Senate* dealing with the separation of votes on a bill, either at second or third reading. Although the Senate Speaker has the authority to separate votes on complicated questions (an authority that has, however, only been used once), the questions for readings of a bill are quite simple (“That the bill be read for the second/third time”). If separate votes were allowed, and one were rejected, this would be tantamount to an amendment to the bill, which is not permitted at second reading. The Speaker also reminded senators that, unlike the other place, amendments to the text of the bill could be proposed and voted upon at the third reading stage, providing an opportunity for senators to refine the bill before the final vote. Ultimately, it was ruled that the vote would not be split, either at second or at third reading.

### Committees of the Whole

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Pursuant to the order of June 12, on June 16, 17 and 18, the Senate resolved into Committees of the Whole to consider the subject matter of Bill C-5. Over the three days **Chrystia Freeland**, Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, **Dominic LeBlanc**, Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy, and **Rebecca Alty**, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations appeared, accompanied by officials. In addition, the Committee of the Whole heard from several other witnesses from Indigenous organizations, business groups, environmental groups and others.

The Senate also resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole on June 17 to consider the subject matter of Bill C-4, *An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure*, with **François-Philippe Champagne**, Minister of Finance and National Revenue, accompanied by officials.

### Legislation

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Four Commons bills were passed by the Senate without amendment this quarter and received Royal Assent by written declaration on June 26: Bill C-202, *An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management)*; Bill C-5, *One Canadian Economy Act*; Bill C-6, *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2025-26*; and Bill C-7, *Appropriation Act No. 2, 2025-26*.

## Committees

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On May 29, a motion was adopted naming members of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, as well as establishing meeting provisions.

A motion was adopted on June 11 appointing senators to serve on the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance until the end of day on June 30, 2025, or until the adoption by the Senate of a report of Selection Committee recommending the senators to serve on the committee, whichever occurred first.

A motion was adopted on June 17, which impacts committee membership for the remainder of the session. The motion increased committee membership and authorized the Committee of Selection to make recommendations on issues relating to the duration of membership on committees. The motion also authorized the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament and the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight to elect three deputy chairs.

On June 18, the first report of the Selection Committee was presented, which recommended the senators to serve on committees and the duration of committee membership. The report was placed on Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting and adopted on June 19.

The first report of the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, entitled *Nomination of External Members*, was presented on June 25. With leave of the Senate, it was considered immediately and adopted.

On June 26, the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance tabled its first report, entitled *Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026*, and its second report entitled *Supplementary Estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026*. Both reports were placed on Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting.

## Senators

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Senator **Donald Neil Plett** retired from the Senate on May 14. Appointed by Prime Minister **Stephen Harper** on August 27, 2009, he represented the province of Manitoba and served as Leader of the Opposition from November 2019 until his retirement. Before being appointed to the Senate, Senator Plett was

the owner and manager of Landmark Mechanical, a heating and ventilation company in Manitoba. He was an active member of his community, serving on the Board of Governors of Red River College, president of the Chamber of Commerce, chair of the Village Council, and chair of the local Utilities Board. Senator Plett also served as the president of the Conservative Party of Canada. During his tenure in the Senate, he served as chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, the Committee of Selection and the Subcommittee on Long Term Vision and Plan, as well as being a member of, among others, the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples, the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence and the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations.

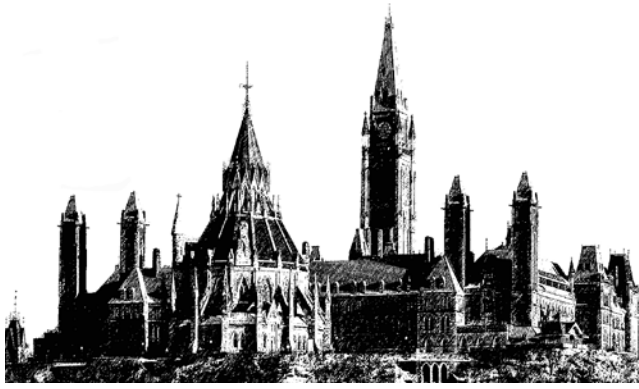
On May 26, Senators **Allister W. Surette, Baltej S. Dhillon, Martine Hébert, Danièle Henkel, Duncan Wilson, Katherine Hay, Tony Ince** and **Sandra Pupatello** were sworn in and took their seat in the Senate Chamber.

On May 28, Senators **Dawn Arnold**, and **Farah Mohamed** were introduced and took their seats in the Senate Chamber

Senator **Nancy Uqquujuq Karetak-Lindell** and **Todd Lewis** were introduced on May 29.

Senator **Marc Gold** retired from the Senate on June 30. He was appointed to the Senate on November 25, 2016, on the recommendation of Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** and represented the Senate division of Stadacona in Quebec. From January 2020, he served as Government Representative in the Senate. Prior to his appointment, Senator Gold was a law professor at McGill University, was Vice-President of Maxwell Cummings and Sons, a family-owned private real estate and investment firm, and served for 10 years as the Chair of *ENSEMBLE pour le respect de la diversité*. Senator Gold also served on the Board of Directors and was Chair of the Tenure and Promotions Committee of the Université de Montréal and was named director emeritus in recognition of his service to the university upon the end of his mandate. During his time as a senator, he served on the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs and the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, on which he served as deputy chair.

**Katy Quinn**  
Procedural Clerk



## House of Commons

### Introduction

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This account covers key highlights from mid-April 2025 to June 20, 2025. The House adjourned for the summer on June 20, 2025, and is scheduled to resume sitting on September 15, 2025.

### End of the 44th Parliament

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#### *Dissolution and General Election*

The 44th Parliament was dissolved by proclamation of Governor General **Mary Simon**, on March 23, 2025. The general election was held on April 28, 2025.

The redistribution of electoral districts, proclaimed on September 22, 2023, established a new electoral map of 343 ridings. These changes came into effect with the dissolution of the 44th Parliament launching the 45th general election.

The general election resulted in the Liberal Party of Canada forming a minority government. Neither the New Democratic Party of Canada nor the Green Party of Canada met the threshold of 12 members required for recognized party status in the House of Commons. The results reported by Elections Canada, by party standings in the House, are as follows: the Liberal Party of Canada won 169 seats, the Conservative Party of Canada won 144 seats, the Bloc Québécois won 22 seats, the New Democratic Party of Canada won seven seats, and the Green Party of Canada won one seat.

Prime Minister **Mark Carney** (Nepean) won his seat and remained Prime Minister. **Pierre Poilievre** was defeated in the riding of Carleton, in Ontario, by **Bruce Fanjoy**. While Mr. Poilievre remained Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, he no longer served as Leader of the Opposition as he no longer held a seat in the House. On May 6, 2025, **Andrew Scheer**

(Regina—Qu'Appelle) was designated Leader of the Official Opposition on an interim basis. Mr. Poilievre was expected to seek election in Alberta following the resignation of **Damien Kurek** (Battle River—Crowfoot), which took place on June 17, 2025.

**Jagmeet Singh** was defeated in his riding by **Wade Chang** (Burnaby Central) and has since resigned as Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada. On May 6, 2025, **Don Davies** (Vancouver Kingsway) was appointed interim leader.

### Opening of the 45th Parliament

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#### *The New Cabinet*

On May 13, 2025, Prime Minister Carney announced the composition of his new Cabinet, consisting of 29 ministers and 10 secretaries of state. The last time secretaries of state were appointed was under **Stephen Harper's** government in 2007. Although secretaries of state are not full members of Cabinet, they may attend Cabinet meetings when matters related to their areas of responsibility are on the agenda.

#### *Election of the 40th Speaker of the House of Commons and the Other Chair Occupants*

On May 26, 2025, the House proceeded to the election of the new Speaker. Six candidates ran for the position and **Francis Scarpaleggia** (Lac-Saint-Louis) was elected 40th Speaker of the House of Commons via secret ballot. Speaker Scarpaleggia has been a Member of Parliament since 2004.

On May 28, 2025, **Tom Kmiec** (Calgary Shepard) was appointed Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole. The following day, **Alexandra Mendès** (Brossard—Saint-Lambert) and **John Nater** (Perth—Wellington) were appointed Assistant Deputy Speaker and Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole and Assistant Deputy Speaker and Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole respectively.

#### *Opening of the session by the Sovereign*

On May 27, 2025, **King Charles III** visited Canada and delivered the Speech from the Throne to open the First Session of the 45th Parliament. The last time the Sovereign delivered the throne speech was on October 18, 1977 (Third Session of the 30th Parliament). The last opening of the first session of a parliament dates back to October 14, 1957 (23rd Parliament).

### *Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne*

On May 27, 2025, **Corey Hogan** (Calgary Confederation) moved the main motion in relation to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne and debate arose. The following day, which was the first of six allotted days for debate, the Leader of the Official Opposition, **Andrew Scheer** (Regina—Qu'Appelle), moved an amendment to the motion urging the government to include a commitment to present an economic update or a budget before the House adjourned for the summer. The amendment specified that the update or budget would include measures to unleash Canada's economic potential, along with full accountability for public finances. During the debate, **Yves-François Blanchet** (Beloeil—Chambly) and **Jenny Kwan** (Vancouver East) moved subamendments. The House adopted the subamendments on May 29, 2025, and June 2, 2025, respectively.

The motion also provided for report stage and third reading to be completed by June 20, 2025, with limited debate.

The amendment, as amended, was also adopted on June 2, 2025. Then on June 4, 2025, during the sixth and final allotted day, the main motion, as amended, was put to a vote and adopted on division. It is rare for this type of motion on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne to be adopted with one or more amendments, whether on division or not.

### **Legislation**

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#### *Adoption at All Stages - Bill C-202, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management)*

On May 29, 2025, Mr. Blanchet introduced Bill C-202, *An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management)*.

On June 5, 2025, with unanimous consent, the bill was deemed adopted at all stages in the House of Commons and sent to the Senate. On June 17, 2025, the House received a message from the Senate indicating that Bill C-202 had been passed without amendment. On June 26, 2025, the bill received royal assent.

#### *Consideration of Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act*

On June 13, 2025, the government moved *Government*

*Business No. 1*, concerning the consideration of Bill C-5, *An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act*, to manage the proceedings on the bill.

The programming motion ordered that second reading begin immediately after the adoption of the order, with limited debate, followed by a vote on all questions necessary to dispose of second reading. It set out provisions for committee consideration, including deadlines for clause-by-clause consideration and the submission of amendments, and authorized the committee to report back to the Clerk. The motion also ordered that the report stage and third reading be completed by June 20, 2025, with limited debate.

On June 20, 2025, Ms. Kwan rose on a point of order, noting that Bill C-5 contains two distinct components — interprovincial trade and major infrastructure projects — and argued that, under Standing Order 69.1, these components should be subject to separate votes.

Subsequently, **Xavier Barsalou-Duval** (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères) rose on a point of order regarding the Speaker's earlier decision not to select certain Bloc Québécois motions in amendment at report stage. Mr. Barsalou-Duval argued that the order adopted by the House limited the possibility of voting in committee on certain sections of the bill after midnight, which he intended to do with his amendments submitted for the report stage but that were not selected by the Chair.

Later, **Philip Lawrence** (Northumberland—Clarke) raised a separate point of order concerning the grouping of Motions Nos. 18 and 19 for voting purposes at report stage. He explained that the two motions dealt with different Acts, the *Canada Labour Code* and the *Species at Risk Act*, and engaged a distinct subject matter.

The Speaker ruled on the points of order. In response to Mr. Barsalou-Duval, the Speaker upheld the earlier decision not to select the Bloc Québécois motions at report stage. The Speaker concluded that, notwithstanding the timing of the clause-by-clause consideration, members retained the opportunity to submit amendments in accordance with the deadline set by the House order adopted on June 16, 2025. The Speaker noted that the motions in question were not moved in committee and were therefore inadmissible at report stage. However, the Speaker did revise the voting pattern and directed that Motions Nos. 18 and

19 be voted on separately, recognizing their distinct subject matter and legislative implications.

Last, the Speaker found that Bill C-5 contained two separate legislative initiatives without a unifying principle. Pursuant to Standing Order 69.1, the Speaker directed that the bill be divided for the purposes of voting at third reading. The bill was adopted by the House on June 20, 2025.

Subsequently, on June 26, 2025, the House received a message from the Senate informing it that Bill C-5 was passed without amendment; and on the same day, the bill received royal assent.

### Questions of Privilege

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#### *Question of privilege concerning Alleged Misleading Minister Testimony in Committee of the Whole*

On June 11, 2025, **Jean-Denis Garon** (Mirabel) raised a question of privilege regarding the conduct of the Minister of Finance and National Revenue, **François-Philippe Champagne** (Saint-Maurice—Champlain) during the study of the estimates in committee of the whole on June 10, 2025. Mr. Garon argued that the minister deliberately misled the House by denying that the Canada carbon rebate cheques issued during the election were sent before the corresponding carbon tax had been collected.

On June 13, 2025, **Shannon Stubbs** (Lakeland) raised a question of privilege concerning statements made by the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, **Tim Hodgson** (Markham—Thornhill) also raised during the consideration of the estimates in the committee of the whole, this time on June 11, 2025. Ms. Stubbs argued that the minister deliberately misled the House by claiming that politicians do not select projects deemed to be in the national interest under Bill C-5, *An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act*. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Champagne and **Kevin Lamoureux** (Winnipeg North) rose to address the questions of privilege; arguing that no deliberate attempt was made to mislead the House.

On June 19, 2025, the Speaker ruled on both questions of privilege. He explained that while both allegations arose from exchanges in committee of the whole, he noted that such matters must first be raised and reported from the committee itself before the House can consider them. The Speaker concluded that they did not meet the high threshold required to establish a *prima facie* question of privilege.

### Temporary Changes to the House of Commons Standing Orders

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#### *Temporary Changes to Standing Order 81*

On May 27, 2025, by unanimous consent, the House amended Standing Order 81(4) and 81(5) until June 23, 2025, to expedite the business of supply. Under the temporary changes, all votes on the Main and Supplementary Estimates 2025-26, and Supplementary Estimates (A), 2025-26 were immediately referred to a committee of the whole upon being tabled. Following consultations with other House leaders, the government designated four days for the consideration of the estimates in committee of the whole. On each of those days, the committee began its work at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment and sat for a period not exceeding four hours solely for the purpose of asking questions to the government regarding the estimates. Lastly, the motion provided that at the conclusion of the time provided for debate on the fourth designated day, the estimates were deemed reported back to the House. However, on June 11, 2025, notwithstanding the order of May 27, 2025 the House adopted a new order adding a fifth designated day, June 12, 2025, to debate the estimates.

#### *Other Changes to the Standing Orders*

On June 5, 2025, by unanimous consent, the House adopted a special order, for the duration of the 45th Parliament, amending Standing Order 104(2) to specify the number of committee members for each recognized party and suspend various Standing Orders relating to parliamentary secretaries.

Another provision of the special order stipulated that the *Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs* (PROC) be appointed by having the whip of each recognized party submit a list of their members with the Clerk of the House no later than June 6, 2025, instead of listing the members' names in a motion. The special order also gave an instruction to the Clerk of the House to convene a PROC meeting no later than June 10, 2025.

Finally, the special order also included a provision allowing a minister of the Crown to move, after midnight, the suspension of the sitting until 9:00 a.m. later that day when the House has not completed a series of recorded divisions.

## Other

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### *Emergency Debate*

On June 2, 2025, **Leah Gazan** (Winnipeg Centre) requested that an emergency debate be held on the wildfires in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The Speaker granted the request and the emergency debate was held the following day.

### *Moments of Silence*

#### *Moment of Silence Regarding the Tragedy at the Lapu Lapu Festival in Vancouver*

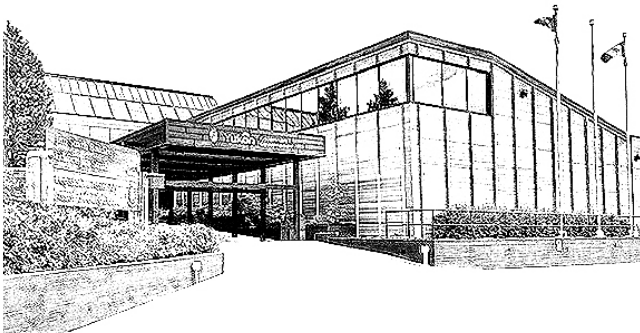
On May 26, 2025, after speeches congratulating the new Speaker on his election, the House observed a moment of silence regarding the tragic event of April 26, 2025, at the Lapu Lapu Festival in Vancouver, British Columbia.

#### *Moment of Silence in Memory of Marc Garneau*

On June 4, 2025, the House observed a moment of silence in memory of the late **Marc Garneau**. The following day, the House observed a second moment of silence. Subsequently, it was agreed by unanimous consent that following the moment of silence, tributes would be delivered by a member of each recognized party, as well as by a member of the New Democratic Party (NDP) and the member of the Green Party.

**Vicky Sedhya Maurice-Sevigny**

Table Research Branch, House of Commons



## Yukon

### 2025 Spring Sitting

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On May 1, the 2025 Spring Sitting adjourned. The 32-day Sitting had commenced March 6, 2025. It is

expected to be the final Sitting of the 35<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly as an election is required by November 3, 2025, under Yukon's *Elections Act*.

### Government Bills

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Over the course of the 2025 Spring Sitting, each of the eight government bills that had been introduced (and listed in Yukon's previous legislative report) progressed through all stages, and received assent:

- Bill No. 46, *Residential Tenancies Act*
- Bill No. 47, *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*
- Bill No. 48, *Early Learning and Child Care Act*
- Bill No. 49, *Technical Amendments (Estates, unclaimed bodies and related matters) Act (2025)*
- Bill No. 50, *Inclusive Yukon Families Act*
- Bill No. 216, *Third Appropriation Act 2024-25*
- Bill No. 217, *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*
- Bill No. 218, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2025-26*

Three of those bills were amended in Committee of the Whole before passing the House: Bill No. 46, *Residential Tenancies Act*, Bill No. 48, *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, and Bill No. 50, *Inclusive Yukon Families Act*.

### Private Members' Bills

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Two Private Members' bills were introduced during the 2025 Spring Sitting by **Kate White**, Leader of the Third Party:

- Bill No. 309, *Act to Amend the Elections Act, with Respect to Political Contributions*
- Bill No. 310, *Act Respecting the Yukon Medical Association*

Bill No. 309 was called for second reading debate during Opposition Private Members' Business on March 19, 2025, but debate on the bill was immediately adjourned. The bill did not receive any further consideration.

On April 2, 2025, Bill No. 310 passed second reading with a unanimous vote. Consideration in Committee of the Whole took place on April 2 and 16, 2025, and the bill was reported with amendments. Unanimous consent was granted to proceed with third reading on the same day as the bill was reported with amendments, and the bill was then passed by the House on April 16, 2025. On the final day of the Sitting, May 1, 2025, the bill received assent.

## Changes to Scheduling of Sitting Due to Power Outages

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On April 9, 2025, during the appearance of witnesses in Committee of the Whole from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation, a power outage in the Chamber disrupted proceedings. The next sitting day on April 10 was subsequently cancelled when power to the Legislative Assembly had still not been fully restored.

In a statement on April 14, Speaker **Jeremy Harper** noted “For today and for the rest of the Sitting, we will be reducing our power load” and that “A plan is being worked on for a permanent solution, with work likely taking place during the summer and into the fall.”

To account for the time lost due to the power problems, without extending the overall length of the Sitting, the Assembly adopted sessional orders to sit outside of its normal hours (1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday) from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, April 23, and 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Friday, April 25, 2025. The witnesses whose appearance had been cut short on April 9, appeared before Committee of the Whole again on April 23, 2025.

## Appearance of Witnesses From Court-Appointed Receiver for Eagle Gold Mine

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During Opposition Private Members’ Business on April 16, 2025, the Legislative Assembly adopted a motion for **Michelle Grant** and another senior official from PricewaterhouseCoopers to appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to answer questions regarding the receivership, operations, and management of the Eagle Gold mine site. The mine was the site of a catastrophic heap leach failure on June 24, 2024.

On April 25, 2025, **Scott Kent**, Official Opposition House Leader, rose on a Question of Privilege regarding correspondence from Ms. Grant indicating that she did not recognize the power of the Legislative Assembly to call for persons to appear. Following the Speaker’s ruling that there appeared to be a *prima facie* case of breach of privilege, Mr. Kent moved a motion to find Ms. Grant in contempt of the House. Debate on the motion was adjourned.

Mr. Kent withdrew the contempt motion on April 28, with the unanimous consent of the Assembly, and on April 30, 2025, the witnesses from PricewaterhouseCoopers, Ms. Grant and **Graham**

**Page**, appeared before Committee of the Whole to answer questions.

## Passing of Former Sergeant-at-Arms

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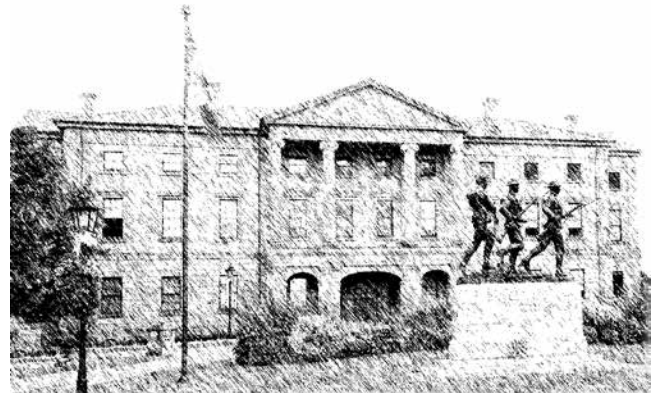
The Speaker made a statement on May 1, 2025, in remembrance of **Rudy Couture**, former Sergeant-at-Arms, who served the Yukon Legislative Assembly from October 2001 to May 26, 2016.

## New Premier

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On May 7, **Ranj Pillai**, announced his intention to resign from the role of Premier. The Yukon Liberal Party held a convention to select a new leader on June 19, 2025. On June 27, **Mike Pemberton** was sworn in as Premier and Minister of the Executive Council Office. The Premier does not currently hold a seat in the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Pillai remains in Cabinet as Minister of Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation.

**Allison Lloyd**  
Deputy Clerk



## Prince Edward Island

### Second Session, Sixty-seventh General Assembly

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The Second Session of the Sixty-seventh General Assembly opened on March 25 and adjourned to the call of the Speaker on May 16, for a total of 30 sitting days. The House is scheduled to meet for the fall sitting on November 4.

The Draft Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne was debated over seven days. Three amendments were moved but not carried, and the Address in Reply passed on April 4.

Minister of Finance **Jill Burrige** delivered the Budget Address on April 10, and the 2025-2026 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure were tabled the same day. The budget totaled \$3.5 billion, with a deficit of just under \$184 million. Health continues to be the area of greatest spending, with a budget of just under \$1.1 billion for Health PEI and \$166 million for the Department of Health and Wellness. Next is education, with \$467 million for the Department of Education and Early Years and the two provincial education authorities. The budget included a \$32 million Tariff and Trade Contingency Fund to support businesses and workers affected by tariffs, and a \$10 million Tariff Working Capital loan program. Decreases in corporate and personal income tax rates, efforts to hire more internationally trained physicians and nurses, and expansion of patient medical homes were also highlighted. The Estimates were considered in Committee of the Whole House over 15 sitting days and ultimately approved.

Government put forward 20 bills during the sitting; 19 received Royal Assent and one has been read a first time and remains on the Order Paper. Bill 15, *Interprovincial Trade and Mobility Act*, received the most debate. The bill allows goods produced and persons licensed in reciprocating jurisdictions to be treated as though they were produced or licensed in Prince Edward Island, with reciprocating jurisdictions defined as signatories to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement that have similar legislation in force. Regulated and registered health professions and lawyers are not covered under the bill, and additional professions may also be exempted by regulation. The bill was debated over three days in Committee of the Whole House and ultimately recommended and passed, but awaits proclamation as of this writing. Two private members' bills were passed during the sitting. Bill 100, *An Act to Amend the Planning Act*, requires various decision makers to give due consideration to the preservation and protection of arable land when evaluating several types of applications under the *Act*. Bill 101, *An Act to Amend the Education Act*, requires education authorities to include in their annual reports information on complaints of sexual misconduct and supports provided to students in relation to sexual misconduct, and to establish policies on the prevention of and response to sexual misconduct after seeking public input on such policies.

### **Speaker's Ruling**

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On May 1, Speaker **Sidney MacEwen** ruled on a point of order raised by **Peter Bevan-Baker** (District

17: New Haven-Rocky Point) at the conclusion of Oral Question Period on the previous day, in objection to language spoken by Minister of Housing, Land and Communities **Steven Myers**. The Speaker found that though the member had followed proper procedure in waiting until the end of Question Period to raise the point of order, he did not specify what language he found offensive, and therefore it was difficult to rule upon the matter. Nonetheless, the Speaker indicated that in reviewing the previous day's proceedings, offensive language was used, and he reminded members that language used in the House should be temperate and worthy of the place in which it is spoken.

### **Committee Activities**

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Following the closing of the winter-spring sitting, committees of the Assembly resumed their work during the May-June period. The Standing Committee on Health and Social Development continued its review of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, including by inviting any interested members of the public to present to the committee or submit written input. The provisions of the *Act* require it to be comprehensively reviewed every six years by a committee of the Legislative Assembly, which shall report to the Assembly within a year of the review and possibly make recommendations for amendments to the *Act*. The Standing Committee on Education and Economic Growth held meetings on student safety in Island schools, hearing from officials of the Public Schools Branch and the Department of Education and Early Years, as well as former Chief Justice **David Jenkins**, who has been appointed by government to lead a third-party review of the policies, procedures, and processes of the Department and the English- and French-language school branches following incidents related to student safety. The Standing Committee on Public Accounts reviewed the Auditor General's *Annual Report to the Legislative Assembly 2025* and met with Department of Social Development and Seniors officials regarding the Auditor General's *Grant Funding to Non-Government Organizations* report and Department of Finance officials regarding his *Long-Term Fiscal Sustainability* report. The Standing Committee on Rules, Regulations, Private Bills and Privileges met to consider the Rules of the Legislative Assembly, in particular the rule on extending the hours of the House, the budget process and committee mandates.

## Third Party Leadership

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On June 7, **Matt MacFarlane** (District 19: Borden-Kinkora) won the leadership of the provincial Green Party, which also made him Leader of the Third Party in the House. The Green Party had been led by **Karla Bernard** (District 12: Charlottetown-Victoria Park) on an interim basis since July 2023. Former MLA **Hannah Bell** also ran for party leader.

**Ryan Reddin**

Director of Parliamentary Research



# Saskatchewan

## Adjournment of the Spring Sitting

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The spring sitting of the first session of the thirtieth legislature was adjourned on May 15, 2025. Prior to adjournment, the standing committees spent more than 76 hours considering estimates and supplementary estimates, after which the sums were reported, approved, and included in an appropriation bill. On May 13, 2025, Administrator **Georgina Jackson**, granted Royal Assent to the appropriation bill along with 20 other bills, bringing the total number of bills passed during the session to 24.

A Private Members' motion recognizing the advocacy efforts of the family of **Logan Boulet**, whose organs were donated to six people after the Humboldt Broncos bus crash, was also passed by the Assembly on April 10, 2025. It was moved by a member of the government caucus and received unanimous support from both sides of the House.

## Member's Budget Speech and Apology

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During her budget speech on March 25, 2025, government MLA **Racquel Hilbert** stated, "We did not hear the opposition denounce their federal leader as being a terrorist in India, and denounce the collateral trade damage to Western Canada." The statement

began receiving media attention several weeks later and, on April 9, 2025, MLA Hilbert rose before routine proceedings and apologized for making the comment. Consequently, members of the opposition began repeated calls for MLA Hilbert to be removed from the government caucus and her committee duties for the comments towards the Sikh community. MLA Hilbert was removed from several of her duties, including government deputy caucus chair, Treasury Board, Wanuskewin board of directors, and caucus irrigation committee. She remains a member of the government caucus and a member of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

## Expeditious Passage of Bill

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Of note during the spring sitting was the swift passage of Bill No. 601, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act*, a private member's bill which was introduced on April 1, 2025, by MLA **Bhajan Brar**. The bill proclaims the month of April each year as Sikh Heritage Month. The bill received second reading on April 17, 2025, was immediately considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills, then read a third time and passed on the same day.

## Urgent and Pressing Necessity Motion

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On Wednesday, April 30, 2025, the opposition was granted leave to move a motion pursuant to rule 61—an urgent and pressing necessity motion seeking to ban the practice of using virtual doctors during childbirth and life-threatening emergencies. A government amendment was moved to remove a majority of the wording from the original motion and instead commend the Saskatchewan Health Authority for its expansion of virtual health services. Members debated the motion and amendment, and the debate was adjourned. On Monday, May 5, the Assembly resumed the debate on the motion. The amendment was agreed to on a recorded vote of 32-14, and the amended motion was then passed unanimously on recorded division.

## Recorded Divisions on Motions to Adjourn

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On May 7, 2025, Opposition Leader **Carla Beck** introduced a private members' public bill, *The Referendum and Plebiscite (Keep Saskatchewan in Canada) Amendment Act*, aimed at increasing the threshold of signatures required to trigger a plebiscite on secession.

On May 12, 13, and 14, a member of the opposition requested leave to move a motion to immediately

consider second reading of the bill, but leave was not granted. On each day, the Government House Leader **Tim McLeod** moved to adjourn the Assembly before the bill could be called. As a result, on each day, an opposition member called for a recorded division on the adjournment motion. All these motions passed. On May 15, the final sitting day, leave was again denied for second reading. The Assembly then adjourned the session without the bill being considered further.

### **Condolence Motions for Former MLAs and Statement of Condolence by the Speaker**

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On May 14, 2025, the Speaker delivered a statement of condolence for **William Goodhand**, a former Sergeant-at-Arms and officer of the Assembly. In addition, Premier **Scott Moe** moved motions of condolence honouring five former MLAs who had recently passed away, which were spoken to by members on both sides of the House. The Assembly subsequently passed a transmittal motion authorizing the Speaker to transmit copies of the official records of the tributes to the bereaved families.

### **Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy**

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From April 5 to 9, 2025, Speaker **Todd Goudy**, with support from the Legislative Assembly Service, hosted 20 teachers from across the province for the 23rd Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy. This non-partisan professional development program immerses educators in Saskatchewan's parliamentary system, allowing them to deepen their understanding through direct observation and hands-on experience.

Participants met with the Speaker, ministers, and members of caucus—including leaders, whips, and chairs—as well as members of the judiciary, the media, and the Lieutenant Governor. They also attended information sessions and took part in a model parliament facilitated by the Legislative Assembly Service.

**Tamikani Nkhata**  
Procedural Assistant



## **Alberta**

### **First Session of the 31st Legislature**

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The First Session of the 31st Legislature resumed on February 25, 2025, marking the beginning of the second spring sitting of the session. Evening sittings began on April 28 and continued until adjournment on May 14.

Government bills receiving Royal Assent included:

- Bill 49, *Public Safety and Emergency Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2025* – Enhances disaster response protocols, authorizes the creation of a provincial police force (which municipalities could use), introduces measures to curb illicit scrap metal sales, and provides the flexibility necessary for the Police Review Commission to act as the sole agency for handling complaints involving municipal and First Nations police services.
- Bill 50, *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025* – Permits local political parties to share campaign funds with candidates in Edmonton and Calgary, eliminates municipal council codes of conduct and removes the provision for vote tabulators, clarifies intermunicipal collaboration frameworks, and strengthens protections for new-home builders and buyers through a dispute resolution system. It also allows residents displaced by the 2024 Jasper fire to run in the 2025 municipal election.
- Bill 53, *Compassionate Intervention Act* – Establishes a Compassionate Intervention Commission with authority to order involuntary treatment for individuals with addictions who pose a danger to themselves or others, in either community or secure settings.
- Bill 54, *Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2025* – Reintroduces corporate and union political donations, lowers the threshold for citizen initiatives and recall votes to 10 per cent of voters

from the previous election, eliminates vouching at polling stations, expands third-party advertising, and bans vote tabulators.

- Bill 55, *Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025* – Advances the restructuring of Alberta’s health care system by transferring responsibilities from Alberta Health Services to four new entities: Acute Care, Continuing Care, Primary Care, and Recovery Alberta. It also amends the *Health Information Act* to allow the Ministry of seniors, community and social services to manage data necessary for continuing care delivery in the province.

### Cabinet Changes

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On May 12, **Ric McIver** resigned as the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

On May 16, Premier **Danielle Smith** announced changes to the membership and composition of her cabinet. The new appointees and portfolios include:

- **Myles McDougall**, Minister of Advanced Education
- **Jason Nixon**, Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services
- **Demetrios Nicolaidis**, Minister of Education and Childcare
- **Matt Jones**, Minister of Hospital and Surgical Health Services
- **Rajan Sawhney**, Minister of Indigenous Relations
- **Joseph Schow**, Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration
- **Rick Wilson**, Minister of Mental Health and Addiction
- **Dan Williams**, Minister of Municipal Affairs
- **Adriana LaGrange**, Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services
- **Andrew Boitchenko**, Minister of Tourism and Sport

In addition, **Muhammad Yaseen** has been appointed Associate Minister of Multiculturalism, and **Grant Hunter** has been appointed Associate Minister of Water.

### Election of a New Speaker

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On May 7, **Nathan Cooper** announced his resignation as the 14th Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in preparation for his upcoming appointment as Alberta’s senior representative to the United States. He continued to serve as the Member

for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills until the end of the day on May 22. Before being sworn in as the 885th Member of the Legislative Assembly in 2015, Mr. Cooper was a municipal councillor for Carstairs, Alberta, and served as chief of staff and director of legislative affairs for the Wildrose caucus. First elected as Speaker in 2019, Mr. Cooper is now the eighth longest serving Speaker in the Assembly’s history.

At 10 a.m. on May 13 the Assembly convened to elect a new Speaker. Mr. McIver, MLA for Calgary-Hays, was elected as the 15th Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Speaker McIver has served in the Assembly since 2012 and has held several ministerial roles in addition to serving as Deputy Government House Leader.

### By-elections

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On March 25, **Rodrigo Loyola** resigned during his third term as the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

On June 23 three by-elections were held in Alberta. **Naheed Nenshi**, leader of the Alberta New Democrats and former mayor of Calgary, won the by-election in Edmonton-Strathcona. Fellow New Democrat **Gurtej Singh Brar** was victorious in Edmonton-Ellerslie. The constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills was won by United Conservative candidate **Tara Sawyer**.

### Composition of the Assembly

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On April 16, **Peter Guthrie** was removed from the United Conservative caucus following his public criticism of government procurement practices. He continues to serve as the Member for Airdrie-Cochrane.

Currently the composition of the Assembly is 47 United Conservatives, 38 New Democrats, and two Independent Members.

### Committee Business

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On May 13 the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship was deemed a special committee for the purpose of reviewing the *Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act*. The Committee met on June 27 to commence its review and receive technical briefings from the Public Interest Commissioner and the Ministry of Justice. The Committee has one year to complete its review and report to the Assembly.

**Jody Rempel**  
Committee Clerk



## Manitoba

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Legislature

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The Second Session of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Legislature resumed on March 5, 2025, and adjourned for the summer officially on June 2, 2025. The term “officially” was intentional as many Bills did not receive Concurrence and Third Reading on that sitting day until well after midnight, but they are still considered to have received it on June 2. The Royal Assent ceremony actually took place at 7:55 a.m. on June 3 as the Assembly sat through the night and did not rise until 8:12 a.m. There were multiple recorded votes, with the division bells ringing for one hour each, on many of the 43 Government Bills that received Royal Assent that day.

The sitting was technically the second longest in modern Assembly history. The following lists the top five extended sittings since the start of the 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature (1990-91):

- August 8-9, 2002 (3<sup>rd</sup> Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Legislature): 8:30 a.m. August 8 until 6:57 a.m. August 9 (22 hrs, 27 mins)
- June 2-3, 2025 (2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 43<sup>rd</sup> Legislature): 1:30 p.m. June 2 until 8:12 a.m. June 3 (18 hrs, 42 mins)
- August 17-18, 2000 (1<sup>st</sup> Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Legislature): 10:00 a.m. August 17 until 4:37 a.m. August 18 (18 hrs, 37 mins)
- November 9-10, 2017 (2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Legislature): 10:00 a.m. November 9 until 4:14 a.m. November 10 (18 hrs, 14 mins)
- November 5-6, 2020 (3<sup>rd</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Legislature): 10:00 a.m. November 5 until 3:50 a.m. November 6 (17 hrs, 50 mins).

The House is set to resume sitting on October 1, 2025. This upcoming sitting period promises to be extremely busy as well, especially for Committees,

as the Estimates process in the Committee of Supply still needs to be completed and the Official Opposition designated the following five Bills for delayed consideration in the fall:

- *Bill 8 – The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act* amends previous legislation to prohibit the issuance of new liquor service licences for classes of premises established by regulation in a specified area. Existing liquor service licences are not affected by this amendment.
- *Bill 12 – The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act*, states that an owner of a building that receives construction funding to provide social housing is prohibited from selling or demolishing the building or using it for a different purpose without the corporation’s consent. The consent may be given with or without conditions. The corporation must file a caveat in the appropriate land titles office to reflect the prohibition. The caveat does not prevent the sale of the building by a financial institution on a mortgage sale or foreclosure. The prohibition and the caveat apply to current owners under new or existing agreements as well as subsequent owners of the building. An owner cannot sue the corporation or the government for any loss that might arise from the enactment of the prohibition.
- *Bill 23 – The Public Interest Expression Defence Act* states that a defendant in a proceeding may bring a motion to dismiss the proceeding on the grounds that the proceeding arises from a communication made by the defendant on a matter of public interest. No further steps may be taken by any party in the proceeding or in a proceeding before an administrative tribunal that relates to the same matter of public interest until a decision on the dismissal motion has been made.
- *Bill 30 – The Election Financing Amendment and Elections Amendment Act* amends *The Election Act* as follows:

The term of office for the next Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) is set at 10 years and may be renewed. A term may be extended for up to 12 months, if necessary, due to a general election.

To update the register of voters, the CEO may enter into an agreement with any person or body the CEO considers to be a source of reliable information.

Advanced voting at returning offices is extended to include the Sunday and Monday before election day.

On election day, a voter may vote at any returning office in the province.

Offence provisions relating to publishing false statements and impersonation are added, and an administrative penalty scheme is included to enforce compliance with the new provisions.

The maximum penalty for serious offences is increased. Additionally, beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, the compulsory school age is lowered from seven to six. The age at which a child has the right to attend school is lowered from six to five.

*Bill 40 – An Act respecting “O Canada” and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools (Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act Amended)* dissolves the Advisory Board and its regulations under *The Education Administration Act* and amends *The Public Schools Act* as follows:

Requires school boards to establish and implement a written policy respecting land acknowledgements and treaty acknowledgements;

Removes provisions respecting religious exercises that were found unconstitutional by the court in 1992;

Places obligations in the *Act* rather than in the regulations to require “O Canada” to be sung and citizenship exercises to be held; and

Requires schools to hold a Remembrance Day observance each year on a school day between November 4 and November 10.

## **May 8 – History-Making Day**

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Two significant events occurred in the Assembly on May 8, 2025, one of them made history and the other paid tribute to it.

### **Simultaneous Interpretation of an Indigenous Language**

On May 8, Premier **Wab Kinew** gave a Ministerial Statement in the Cree language on the topic of Spirit Bear Day (Jordan’s Principle). Before making the statement, Speaker **Tom Lindsay** noted that this statement marked “the first time in the 154-year history of this Assembly that we will be providing live, simultaneous interpretation of an Indigenous language to Members

*in the Chamber and those participating virtually during our proceedings. As your Speaker, I believe that this is an important step in advancing the Assembly’s commitment to reconciliation.”*

## **Tribute to Honour World War II Veterans**

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Also on May 8, Government Member **David Pankratz** made a Members’ Statement that recognized the 80th anniversary of VE Day and also paid tribute to three World War II veterans that were given special access to the floor of the Chamber. Prior to the statement Speaker Lindsay sought and received leave of the House to allow the three World War II veterans, **Len Van Roon, Bob Watkins** and **Percy Rosamond** to be seated at the Bar of the House to hear the Members’ Statements. Leave was also subsequently granted to allow the Official Opposition Leader **Obby Khan**, and Independent Liberal Member **Cindy Lamoureux** to respond. The House was then paused for all Members to personally congratulate the veterans.

## **Manitoba Day**

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On May 12, 2025, Speaker Lindsay made a statement marking Manitoba Day and the following excerpts were taken from the statement:

*Today, Monday, May 12, 2025, marks the 155th anniversary of the day The Manitoba Act received Royal Assent in the Canadian Parliament. This Act created the Province of Manitoba and accordingly May 12 has been designated as Manitoba Day.*

*In honour of this occasion, Members will notice some treasured artifacts displayed on the Clerk’s Table today:*

- The Star Blanket cushion and beaded Mace Runner, gifted to us by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in 2010;
- A Métis sash, gifted to us in 2023 by the Manitoba Métis Federation; and
- A soapstone polar bear carving, gifted to us by the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut in 2023.

*These artifacts are displayed in the Chamber today to recognize and pay tribute to the Indigenous people of Manitoba as we celebrate this Day. They serve as a reminder that this Chamber and our Legislative Building reside on the traditional lands of Indigenous people, as we recognize each day in our land acknowledgement....*

*In addition to these artifacts, as we have done for many years now in today’s Speaker’s Parade our Sergeant-at-Arms*

carried our original Manitoba Mace. This Mace made its first formal appearance on March 15th, 1871, on the first sitting day of the first session of the first Manitoba Legislature, held in the home of A.G.B. Bannatyne in the Red River Settlement. The Bannatyne home was destroyed by fire in December 1873 but thankfully the Mace survived. After 13 years of service, our original Mace was retired in 1884 when our current Mace debuted. The original Mace has a permanent home on display outside of the Speaker's office, coming out of retirement annually to mark this day and other special events.

This historical artifact sits on the Table today to reference our past, but also to remind all Members that we are part of a very select group of Manitoba citizens. Since that Mace was first placed on the Clerk's Table in 1871 only 882 Manitobans – including all of us – have served as Members of this Assembly, in this room and the rooms which preceded it...

As we commemorate this event then it is worth remembering that our democracy is a fragile work in progress in need of protection, and this has never been more evident than it is in 2025. In honour of Manitoba Day and with this rich history in mind, I would encourage all Members to reflect on our shared responsibility to serve Manitobans with honour, respect and reverence. I would encourage all of us to remember that our work in this place is part of a very long legacy of service to the people of Manitoba, and we should be thinking of them every time we stand to speak in this House.

**Greg Recksiedler**

Research Clerk/Clerk Assistant



## British Columbia

### Spring Sitting Period

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The Legislative Assembly concluded its spring sitting period on May 29, 2025. A long adjournment motion was adopted authorizing the Speaker to recall

the House should the need arise after consultation with the government. If required due to an emergency or public health measure, the motion also allows for the alteration of the location and means of conducting the sittings of the House by agreement of the Speaker and the House Leaders of each recognized caucus. The Legislative Assembly is anticipated to resume sitting on October 6, 2025.

On March 12, 2025, the Legislative Assembly adopted a motion to amend Standing Orders 2 (1) and 3, which establish the ordinary daily sitting times, to extend the sitting hours to 9:00 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, effective March 31. The usual times prescribed in the Standing Order state that the House adjourn at 6:30 pm on Mondays and Tuesdays, and 7:00 pm on Wednesdays. Per the motion, the order expired on May 30, 2025.

Additionally, on March 12, 2025, the Legislative Assembly adopted a motion enabling certain proceedings of the House to take place in two concurrent sections—Section A and Section B—for the consideration of Estimates and bills at committee stage. On March 13, 2025, the Legislative Assembly passed a motion for the House to go into Committee of Supply and commenced examination of the Estimates. Subsequently, on April 30, 2025, the Legislative Assembly discharged the March 12 motion and adopted a new motion enabling certain proceedings of the House to take place in three concurrent sections (Sections A, B, and C). All three sections were permitted to consider Estimates and bills at committee stage. In total, 188 hours were dedicated to consideration of the Estimates, compared to 179 hours the previous year.

### Legislation

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During the sitting period, a total of 14 bills, including two Private Members' Bills, received Royal Assent. The government's legislative agenda included several bills focused on responding to the current economic climate, including tariffs. These included Bill 7, *Economic Stabilization (Tariff Response) Act*, Bill 8, *Carbon Tax Amendment Act, 2025*, Bill 14, *Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act*, and Bill 15, *Infrastructure Projects Act*.

Bill 7 allows government to respond to actions taken by foreign jurisdictions and support interprovincial cooperation by reducing trade barriers. The bill was substantively amended to address concerns raised by the opposition. Bill 8 eliminates the consumer carbon tax in British Columbia by cancelling all scheduled rate

increases and setting the carbon tax rate to zero dollars per tonne of emissions.

Bill 14 streamlines permitting for renewable energy projects while Bill 15 streamlines and supports different types of infrastructure projects; government designated both bills as matters of confidence. Opposition Members raised concerns about both bills related to striking the balance between streamlining projects and maintaining environmental protections and respecting Indigenous rights. As there was a tie on the motion for third reading for both bills, the Speaker was required to exercise a casting vote. He cast his vote in the affirmative, noting that each bill had passed earlier stages of consideration by the House with a majority of votes.

To complete consideration of six bills, including Bills 7, 14, and 15, the Legislative Assembly adopted a time allocation motion on May 6, 2025, pursuant to Standing Order 81.1 (2), which provides that a Minister may propose a motion for the purpose of allotting a specific number of days or hours for consideration and disposal of proceedings at one or more stages of a public bill, if an agreement cannot be reached with all parties. Ultimately, the time allocation order affected four of the six bills as the House completed consideration of the others prior to the deadlines in the order.

The two Private Members' Bills (Bill M 204, *Perinatal and Postnatal Mental Health Strategy Act*, and Bill M 202, *Eligibility to Hold Public Office Act*), received Royal Assent. They are the first Private Members' bills passed since changes to the Standing Orders with respect to Private Members' Business came into effect in fall 2024.

### Speaker's Rulings

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On March 31, 2025, Government House Leader **Mike Farnworth** made an application under Standing Order 81 that Bill 8, *Carbon Tax Amendment Act, 2025* be permitted to advance through all stages of legislative debate on the same day. Standing Order 81 provides that on urgent or extraordinary occasions a bill may advance multiple stages in one day. The Government House Leader also indicated that, should the Speaker permit the bill to advance through all stages, he would move a motion to allow the House to sit beyond the typical hour fixed for adjournment until all questions on the remaining stages of the bill are put and decided, and should the bill pass, until the bill is presented for Royal Assent.

In his decision, the Speaker **Raj Chouhan**, indicated

that a request under Standing Order 81 must pass a two-part test: first, that the bill address an urgent or extraordinary matter, and second, that the scope of the bill be limited. Noting that the decision of the federal government to eliminate its consumer carbon tax was made after the Legislative Assembly adjourned on March 13, 2025, that the provincial government introduced the bill at hand at the earliest opportunity upon the Legislative Assembly's return, and that the scope of the bill was limited to the repeal of the consumer carbon tax, the Speaker found that the bill and circumstances met these tests. The Speaker ruled that the bill be permitted to advance through all stages of consideration on the same day. The Legislative Assembly subsequently considered and adopted a motion to sit beyond the fixed hour for adjournment.

On April 7, 2025, **Peter Milobar**, MLA for Kamloops Centre, raised a question of privilege regarding whether the Official Opposition could effectively scrutinize the 2025–26 budget and Main Estimates, given that Bill 8, which received Royal Assent after the budget was presented on March 4, 2025, would affect projected tax revenues and expenses. The Speaker noted that the first criterion in considering a question of privilege is whether it was raised at the earliest opportunity. As the bill was introduced on March 31, 2025, the Speaker concluded that **Peter Milobar**, MLA, had a reasonable opportunity to reserve the right to raise the matter earlier while preparing his full submission. Since this was not done, the Speaker ruled that the first criterion was not met and that a *prima facie* breach of privilege had not occurred. The Speaker also provided guidance on the matter stating that while fiscal forecasts can change, he accepts that decisions before the House and the Committee of Supply in terms of Main Estimates have not changed and expenditures by government cannot exceed individual Vote totals without additional legislative authority. He further added that he expects government to fulfill its statutory obligations to provide timely updates throughout the fiscal year.

Following the vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 14, **Sheldon Clare**, MLA for Prince George-North Cariboo, raised a point of order, citing a potential contravention of the *Guidance for Members Participating in Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly Remotely*, issued by the Speaker under Standing Order 8 (3)(b). The concern involved a Member who participated in the division remotely while using a blurred Zoom background. The Speaker ruled that this did not breach the guidance, which prohibits the use of virtual backgrounds due to concerns

about obscuring a Member's location, clarifying that a blurred background is not the same as a virtual background that sets a Member in an artificial location and is therefore permitted. In addition, the Speaker affirmed the importance of voting as one of the most consequential responsibilities of Members and expressed a willingness to engage with House Leaders prior to the fall sitting period and issue updated guidance if required to clarify expectations for remote participation in parliamentary business.

### Ministerial Statements

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On April 28, 2025, in response to the Lapu Lapu Day festival tragedy that occurred in Vancouver on April 26, the Speaker opened proceedings with a brief statement. The Legislative Assembly observed a moment of silence before adjourning for the rest of the day.

The next day, Premier **David Eby** made a statement expressing condolences to those in mourning, gratitude to first responders, and solidarity with the Filipino community in BC. Leader of the Official Opposition **John Rustad** spoke to the importance of the Lapu Lapu Day festival to the Filipino community and the tragic nature of the incident. Leader of the Third Party **Jeremy Valeriote** emphasized the importance of not reinforcing stigma around mental illness. **Mable Elmore**, MLA for Vancouver-Kensington, noted that the Lapu Lapu celebrations, which showcase Filipino strength and culture, took place only steps away from her constituency office. She described the shock and anger experienced by the Filipino community and expressed gratitude for the support from all levels of government and first responders.

On May 5, 2025, **Christine Boyle**, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, made a statement to acknowledge the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People, also known as Red Dress Day. She noted the impact and extent of gender-based violence affecting Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, as well as changes to legislation, policy, and practice and increased funding that aims to make communities safer. Official Opposition House Leader **Á'a:liya Warbus** recognized Métis artist **Jaime Black-Morsette** who created the red dress art installation that led to the use of that symbol, and advocated for increased support for Indigenous communities to address gender-based violence. Third Party House Leader **Rob Botterell** highlighted 13 of the 231 calls for justice included in the final report

of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which he noted require immediate and continuing action.

### Parliamentary Committee Activities

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The spring sitting period was the first sitting since changes to the Standing Orders with respect to Private Members' Business, which included establishing the Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills, came into effect in fall 2024.

During the spring sitting period, the Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills presented four reports. It reported Bill M 202, *Eligibility to Hold Public Office Act*, complete without amendment, and after the bill was recommitted for the purpose of considering amendments, reported it complete with amendment. The Committee reported Bill M 204, *Perinatal and Postnatal Mental Health Strategy Act*, complete with amendment. After the sponsor of Bill M 205, *Mental Health Amendment Act, 2025*, advised that she would be seeking consent of the Assembly to withdraw her bill, the Committee released a report recommending the bill not proceed further. The report was subsequently concurred in by the House and the bill was removed from the Order Paper.

On May 28, 2025, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services released its report *Review of Statutory Offices' Supplementary Funding Requests for 2025-26*, which made recommendations regarding supplementary funding requested by statutory officers for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

### Members' Compensation

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On March 28, 2025, the Legislative Assembly Management Committee adopted a motion to withhold the administration of the statutory increase to Members' basic compensation scheduled to come into effect on April 1, 2025. Per the *Members' Remuneration and Pensions Act*, Members' basic compensation is adjusted by the percentage increase of the consumer price index of the previous year. This motion allows staff to withhold the administration of the increase to Members' basic compensation until a formal amendment to the *Act* is brought forward. Bill 10, *Attorney General Statutes Amendment Act, 2025* which is currently on the Order Paper for second reading, includes such an amendment.

## Changes in the Legislature

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On May 1, 2025, the Legislative Assembly adopted motions to appoint permanent officers of the Legislative Assembly, in accordance with section 39 (1) of the provincial *Constitution Act* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c.66). **Seunghie Suzie Seo** was appointed as a permanent officer in her capacity as Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel. **Artour Sogomonian**, who had previously served as Clerk Assistant, Parliamentary Services, was appointed as a permanent officer in the new capacity of Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

**Hanna Kim**  
Committee Researcher

**Mary Heeg**  
Committee Research Analyst



# Newfoundland And Labrador

## Spring 2025 Sitting

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Following a period of adjournment, the spring sitting resumed on April 9 for the delivery of the budget speech, commencing the annual budgetary process.

The Standing Committees on Government Services, Resource and Social Services proceeded to review the Estimates referred on Budget Day. Concurrence reports of each Committee were presented in the House on May 12, debated and passed that day.

An amendment and sub-amendment to the budget motion were moved but did not pass. Both the budget motion and main supply passed on May 14.

The House passed nine other bills in the spring sitting. The sitting adjourned on May 22 to the call of the Chair.

## Swearing-in of Province's 15<sup>th</sup> Premier

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On February 25, 2025, **Andrew Furey**, Newfoundland and Labrador's 14<sup>th</sup> Premier, announced he would be stepping down when the Liberal Party chose a new Leader, but will remain the Member for Humber - Gros Morne.

Two current MHAs – **John Hogan**, Member for Windsor Lake; and **John Abbott**, Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi – entered the leadership race. Both Members held Cabinet positions and Mr. Hogan was the Government House Leader, but each stepped back from their Ministerial and other responsibilities to sit as private Members while the leadership race was ongoing.

Mr. Hogan was announced as the new Leader of the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador on May 3 and was sworn-in as the province's 15<sup>th</sup> Premier on May 9.

There was also a Cabinet swearing-in ceremony that day which saw several current Ministers changing portfolios and two new Ministers introduced to Cabinet.

## Resignation of Members

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On May 1, **Andrew Parsons**, Member for Burgeo - LaPoile resigned. At the time of his resignation, he served as Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology and Attorney General. Mr. Parsons was first elected on October 11, 2011, in the 47<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and served in various roles both in the Official Opposition and Government. During his tenure, he also served as the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, as well as Government House Leader.

On July 3, Mr. Furey, Member for Humber - Gros Morne, resigned. Mr. Furey served as Newfoundland and Labrador's 14<sup>th</sup> Premier from 2020 until May 2025.

## Appointment of Clerk of the House of Assembly

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Further to a resolution passed by the House on May 15, **Kim Hawley George**, was appointed permanent Clerk of the House of Assembly further to section 7 of the *House of Assembly, Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*.

Ms. Hawley George was appointed in an acting capacity in August 2023 and has served in the role since that time. She previously served as Law Clerk

and Parliamentary Counsel of the House of Assembly from 2017 to 2023 and served concurrently in the role of Clerk Assistant from 2020 to 2023. Prior to joining the Legislature, Ms. Hawley George served as Chief Legislative Counsel and Assistant Deputy Minister for Legal Services and the Office of the Legislative Counsel in the Department of Justice and Public Safety.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Table and entire House of Assembly Service offers its congratulations to Ms. Hawley George on this appointment – we know that she will continue to serve this Legislature and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador with competence, professionalism, integrity and faithful stewardship.

### **Reappointment of Citizens' Representative**

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**Bradley Moss** was reappointed by resolution of the House of Assembly as the Citizens' Representative for Newfoundland and Labrador for a second six-year term on May 22, 2025. He was appointed for his first six-year term on May 1, 2019.

### **Resolution of Controverted Election Applications**

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On June 11, **Travis Wooley**, Chief Electoral Officer (A) advised that a resolution was reached between all parties involved in the Controverted Election Applications from the 2021 General Election. A joint statement was issued by all parties to the proceedings on that date and is available here: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/releases/2025/elections/0611n05/>.

### **Auditor General Delivers Report to the Public Accounts Committee on Audit of Personal Care Homes**

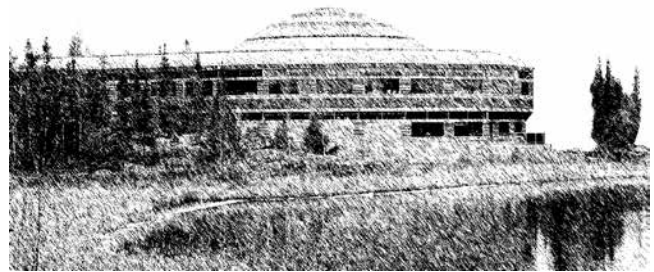
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Auditor General, **Denise Hanrahan**, delivered a performance audit report to the Public Accounts Committee on April 1 on matters related to personal care homes in the province. The audit was initiated at the request of the Committee in December 2023 pursuant to section 22 of the *Auditor General Act, 2021*, following concerns that previous recommendations of the Auditor General related to personal care homes remained outstanding at that time.

The Public Accounts Committee held a public hearing on these matters on May 20 with officials from the Department of Health and Community Services, and Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services appearing.

The Public Accounts Committee's request to the Auditor General also included an audit of matters related to long-term facilities in the province, which is currently underway.

**Bobbi Russell**  
Principal Clerk of Committees



## **Northwest Territories**

The first session of the 20<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly reconvened from May 21 to May 29, 2025. During this sitting the Assembly reviewed Capital and Operational Supplementary Estimate and carried the associated supplementary appropriation bills, among other business.

### **Legislation**

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The Standing Committee on Government Operations reported to the house that they had concluded consideration of Bill 17 *Municipal and Community Affairs Statutes Amendment Act* and Bill 18 *An Act to Amend the Partnership and Business Names Act* and that those bills were ready for further consideration in Committee of the Whole. During this sitting four new bills were introduced, received first and second reading, and were referred to Standing Committees for review:

- Bill 26: *An Act to Amend the Public Service Act*, is a private Member's bill put forward by Shauna Morgan, the MLA for Yellowknife North, which would allow for a process to authorize and deauthorize a separate bargaining unit for unionized public sector nurses in the NWT registered with the College and Association of Nurses in the NWT and Nunavut. Currently, the *Public Service Act* establishes bargaining units for teachers, employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, and all other employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Bill 26 seeks to add nurses to the list of separate bargaining units. Bill 26 received second reading

on May 26, 2025.

- Bill 27: *An Act to Amend the Protection Against Family Violence Act*, amends the current act to improve access to emergency protection orders and to address physical and online harassment. This bill widens the definition of family members who may apply for protection under the *Act*, adds stalking to the list of actions that constitute family violence, and will establish a new civil recourse related to stalking for victims of family violence. It received second reading on May 28, 2025.
- Bill 28: *An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance, No. 2*, proposes one change to the current *Act*: The Schedule is amended by increasing the Student Loan Fund, also known as the Revolving Loan Limit, from \$45M to \$55M. This change is proposed to allow for an increase of \$10M to the maximum cumulative amount that may be loaned to all students. Bill 28 received second reading on May 29, 2025.
- Bill 29: *First Responders Workers' Compensation Amendment Act*, a private Member's bill put forward by **Kieron Testart**, the MLA for Range Lake, would amend the *Workers' Compensation Act* to expand the existing presumptive workers' compensation coverage, which currently covers 14 cancer types and cardiac arrest within 24 hours of attendance at an emergency response, to presumptive coverage of all cancers and heart disease for firefighters. The Bill would also provide new presumptive coverage of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for all first responders. It received second reading on May 29, 2025.

## Motions

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During the May 2025 sitting, seven formal motions were moved in the house, all of which were carried. Two motions originated with the Board of Management and related to the establishment of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, and the appointment of a Member to the Human Rights Adjudication Panel. Two motions originated with Caucus and related to a supplemental recommendation of the Integrity Commissioner on costs in the complaint against the Member for Tu Nedhé-Wiilideh, and the extended adjournment of the house to October 16, 2025. The remaining motions originated with individual Regular Members and related to the recruitment, retention and remuneration of healthcare workers, remuneration of essential staff at the AVENS long-term care facility related to the 2023 wildfire evacuation, and a referral of the Member's Code of Conduct to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges.

## Assent

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On May 29, 2025, the final day of the sitting, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, **Gerald Kisoun**, provided Assent to the following legislation:

- Bill 17: *Municipal and Community Affairs Statutes Amendment Act*;
- Bill 18: *An Act to Amend the Partnership and Business Names Act*;
- Bill 30: *Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization) No. 1, 2025-2026*; and
- Bill 31: *Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2025-2026*.

The House is adjourned until October 16, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.

**Michael Ball**

Manager of House and Journal Services



## Nunavut

### House Proceedings

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The winter 2025 sitting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 6<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly convened on February 20, 2025, and concluded on March 11, 2025. The proceedings of the Committee of the Whole during the winter 2025 sitting were dominated by the consideration of the Government of Nunavut's proposed 2025-2026 main estimates.

Ten bills received Assent during the winter 2025 sitting:

- Bill 43, *An Act to Amend the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation Act*;
- Bill 50, *Fuel Tax Act*;
- Bill 63, *An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act*;

- Bill 64, *Post-Secondary Student Support Act*;
- Bill 67, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*;
- Bill 68, *An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act*;
- Bill 69, *An Act Consequential to the Government Reorganization of 2025*;
- Bill 70, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2025-2026*;
- Bill 71, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2024-2025*; and
- Bill 72, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2025-2026*.

The spring 2025 sitting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 6<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly convened on May 22, 2025, and concluded on June 3, 2025.

Five bills received Assent during the spring 2025 sitting:

- Bill 66, *Early Learning and Childcare Act*;
- Bill 74, *Pharmacy Professions Act*;
- Bill 75, *An Act to Amend the Legislation Act and Other Acts Respecting the Nunavut Gazette*;
- Bill 77, *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act*; and
- Bill 80, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 2, 2025-2026*.

### **Acting Table Officer**

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During the spring 2025 sitting, the Nunavut Table was ably assisted by Northwest Territories Manager of House and Journal Services **Michael Ball**.

### **Committee Hearings**

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From April 24-25, 2025, the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held a televised hearing on the 2023-2024 annual report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Nunavut, **Graham Steele**.

From April 28-29, 2025, the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held a televised hearing on the 2023-2024 annual report of Nunavut's Representative for Children and Youth, **Jane Bates**.

From April 29-30, 2025, the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held a televised hearing on the *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: 2025 Follow-up on Child and Family Services in Nunavut*. Deputy Auditor General of Canada **Andrew Hayes** and officials from the Office of the Auditor

General of Canada appeared as witnesses at the hearing.

On May 1, 2025, the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held a televised hearing on the 2023-2024 territorial public accounts. Auditor General of Canada **Karen Hogan** and officials from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada appeared as witnesses at the hearing.

Numerous Government of Nunavut officials also appeared as witnesses at these hearings, which were presided over by Standing Committee Chair and Iqaluit-Tasiluk MLA **George Hickes**. Mr. Hickes subsequently presented the standing committee's reports on the hearings to the House during its spring 2025 sitting.

### **Passing of Former Members**

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On March 31, 2025, Speaker **Tony Akoak** released a statement concerning the passing of **Kane Tologanak**, who represented the constituency of Central Arctic in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories prior to division in 1999. The community flag of Cambridge Bay was half-masted at the Legislative Assembly Precinct in honour of his passing.

On April 17, 2025, Speaker Akoak released a statement concerning the passing of **Steve Mapsalak**, who represented the constituencies of Akulliq and Aivilik during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assemblies. The community flags of Naujaat and Coral Harbour were half-masted at the Legislative Assembly Precinct in honour of his passing.

During the Legislative Assembly's sitting of June 2, 2025, Speaker Akoak announced the passing of **Red Pedersen**, who represented the constituency of Kitikmeot West in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories prior to division in 1999. Mr. Pedersen was a member of the Order of Canada and the Order of Nunavut. The community flag of Kugluktuk was half-masted at the Legislative Assembly Precinct in honour of his passing.

**Alex Baldwin**

Office of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut



## Ontario

### Election of the Speaker and Appointment of Presiding Officers

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The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario convened the first session of the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament on April 14, 2025. The Clerk, Trevor Day, presided over the election of the Speaker where two Members were nominated: MPP **Donna Skelly**, the Member for Flamborough–Glanbrook, and MPP **Jennifer French**, the Member for Oshawa. After one ballot, MPP Skelly was elected and took the chair as Ontario’s first female Speaker. Speaker Skelly was first elected as an MPP in 2018 and served as the Deputy Speaker during the 43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament.

By Order of the House on April 16, 2025, the following presiding officers of the House were appointed:

- **Effie Triantafilopoulos**, MPP for Oakville North–Burlington, was appointed Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House.
- **Jennifer French**, MPP for Oshawa, was appointed the First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House.
- **Ric Bresee**, MPP for Hastings–Lennox and Addington, was appointed the Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House.
- **Andrea Hazell**, MPP for Scarborough–Guildwood, was appointed the Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House.

### Speech from the Throne

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On April 15, 2025, **Edith Dumont**, Lieutenant Governor, opened the first session of the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament with her delivery of the Speech from the Throne. This marked Her Honour’s first Throne Speech since her installation in November 2023.

### Question of Privilege

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On April 29, 2025, **Kinga Surma**, Minister of Infrastructure, raised a question of privilege with respect to a Question Period exchange with the leader of the third party, MPP **John Fraser**, on the subject of government accountability. Minister Surma indicated that she felt Mr. Fraser had wilfully misled the House in his line of questioning, by misrepresenting the findings of the Auditor General and the Integrity Commissioner.

On May 5, 2025, the Speaker ruled that she did not find evidence of a *prima facie* case of contempt and no tangible confirmation that the Member misled or intended to mislead the House, rather she felt that this was a case of disagreement between the Members. As this was the first question of privilege raised in the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, Speaker Skelly took the opportunity to provide a general explanation of privilege and contempt to all Members as part of her ruling on the matter.

### Notable Legislation

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#### *Budget Bill*

The Minister of Finance introduced the budget bill on May 15, 2025, following the delivery of the budget speech. This year’s budget day fell after the March 31, 2025, deadline provided by the *Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act, 2019*. However, within this same statute an exception is allowed when a general election is conducted within that fiscal year.

#### *Members’ Compensation and Pension*

Bill 34, *MPP Pension and Compensation Act, 2025*, was introduced on May 29, 2025. This bill provides access to a pension for elected Members as well as increases to Members’ salaries, which had been frozen since 2009. With the unanimous consent of the House, the orders for second and third reading of the bill were immediately called, and the questions were put without debate. Second and third reading carried, and the bill received Royal Assent later that day.

### Committees

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#### Committee Membership

By order of the House on April 17, 2025, the membership of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs was appointed, and the regular

meeting schedule for all eight standing committees was set.

At its meeting on April 29, 2025, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs set the membership of the other seven standing committees pursuant to its authority under Standing Order 109.1(a). The Committee's recommendations on committee membership were reported back to the House later that same day and were deemed adopted. This marks the first time this committee has exercised its authority to appoint committee membership at the outset of a new Parliament since this new Standing Order was adopted in April 2024.

### **First and Second Vice-Chairs**

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The Liberal Party of Ontario regained recognized party status after winning 14 seats in the most recent general election. With the composition of the Assembly now including three recognized parties, pursuant to standing order 119(e), each Standing Committee is required to have two Vice-Chairs. Following the election of a Chair, each of the standing committees subsequently appointed a First and Second Vice-chair within the parameters regarding party affiliation provided by the Standing Orders.

### **Bill 5**

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The Standing Committee on the Interior considered Bill 5, *Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025*. This bill received substantial criticism from the opposition parties and significant interest from the public. During the Committee's public hearings on the bill, a large number of people came to watch the proceedings in person, and nearly 500 written submissions were made to the Committee. Many Indigenous leaders, community members and organizations presented to the Committee and expressed their opposition to the bill.

### **Indigenous Language Spoken in Committee**

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**Sol Mamakwa**, MPP for Kiiwetinoong, spoke and asked questions of witnesses in Anishiniimowin (known as Oji-Cree in English) during the Committee's public hearings on Bill 5, with simultaneous interpretation provided in English and French. Witnesses who spoke in Oji-Cree were also able to present and respond to questions with the support of interpretation services. This marks the first instance of Indigenous language interpretation being provided during a committee proceeding since the amendment

to Standing Order 24(a) in April 2024, which permits MPPs to speak in an Indigenous language spoken in Canada.

### **Filibuster at Clause-by-Clause Consideration**

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During clause-by-clause consideration of the bill on May 28, 2025, the official opposition and third party Members delayed the progress of the meeting using a variety of procedural methods including requests for 20-minute recesses on votes (an authority provided by Standing Order 131(a)) and lengthy debate on amendments. The filibuster continued until midnight at which time the Chair was required to adjourn the meeting.

As the Committee did not complete clause-by-clause consideration, on May 29, 2025, the government filed notice of a motion to allocate time to the remaining Committee and House proceedings on Bill 5. This motion was adopted by the House on June 3, 2025. The time allocation order set strict parameters for the Committee's continuation of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill. This included a new deadline for filing amendments to the bill, which was set to be at the time of the adoption of the time allocation motion. The motion also provided that the Committee meet from 1:00 p.m. until midnight on June 3, 2025, that all filed amendments that had not yet been moved would be deemed moved, and that the Chair put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto without debate.

Prior to the deadline set by the time allocation motion, a committee member representing the third party filed 4000 amendments to the bill. During the scheduled clause-by-clause meeting on June 3, the third party Members requested recorded votes on each amendment and section of the bill. The Committee again met until midnight and got as far as motion number 1225 in its package of over 4000 amendments before it adjourned.

On June 4, 2025, pursuant to the order of the House, the bill was deemed reported back to the House with some amendments. The bill received third reading the same day. Protests arose in the public galleries, and following the completion of the third reading vote, the Speaker recessed the House for five minutes for grave disorder.

### **Committee Studies**

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At the time of dissolution of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament two

committees were in the process of conducting studies which have since been reinstated.

On June 5, 2025, the House granted unanimous consent for the Standing Committee on Justice Policy to resume its study of intimate partner violence at the same stage of progress as at the time of dissolution. The Committee had previously concluded hearing from expert witnesses and victims and was in early stages of preparing to conduct report writing meetings. The Committee will resume its work on this study at a time to be determined by the Committee.

Additionally, on May 27, 2025, the House authorized the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to resume its work respecting Indigenous representation as part of the rehabilitation of the legislative building. On June 24, 2025, the Committee attended a council meeting of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to receive feedback about the group's recent tour of the legislative building and grounds of Queen's Park.

## **Summer Adjournment**

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On June 5, 2025, the final day of the spring meeting period, the House adopted a motion providing that when it adjourns that day, it stands adjourned until 10:15 a.m., on October 20, 2025. This order of the House amends the parliamentary calendar set out by the Standing Orders, providing for a later start to the fall meeting period. The House also authorized the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy to meet at the call of the Chair during the summer adjournment period.

The Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy plans to travel to six cities in Ontario in July to conduct public hearings on Bill 9, *Municipal Accountability Act, 2025*.

**Tanzima Khan**  
Committee Clerk

# *SportsCentre: Parliament Hill?*

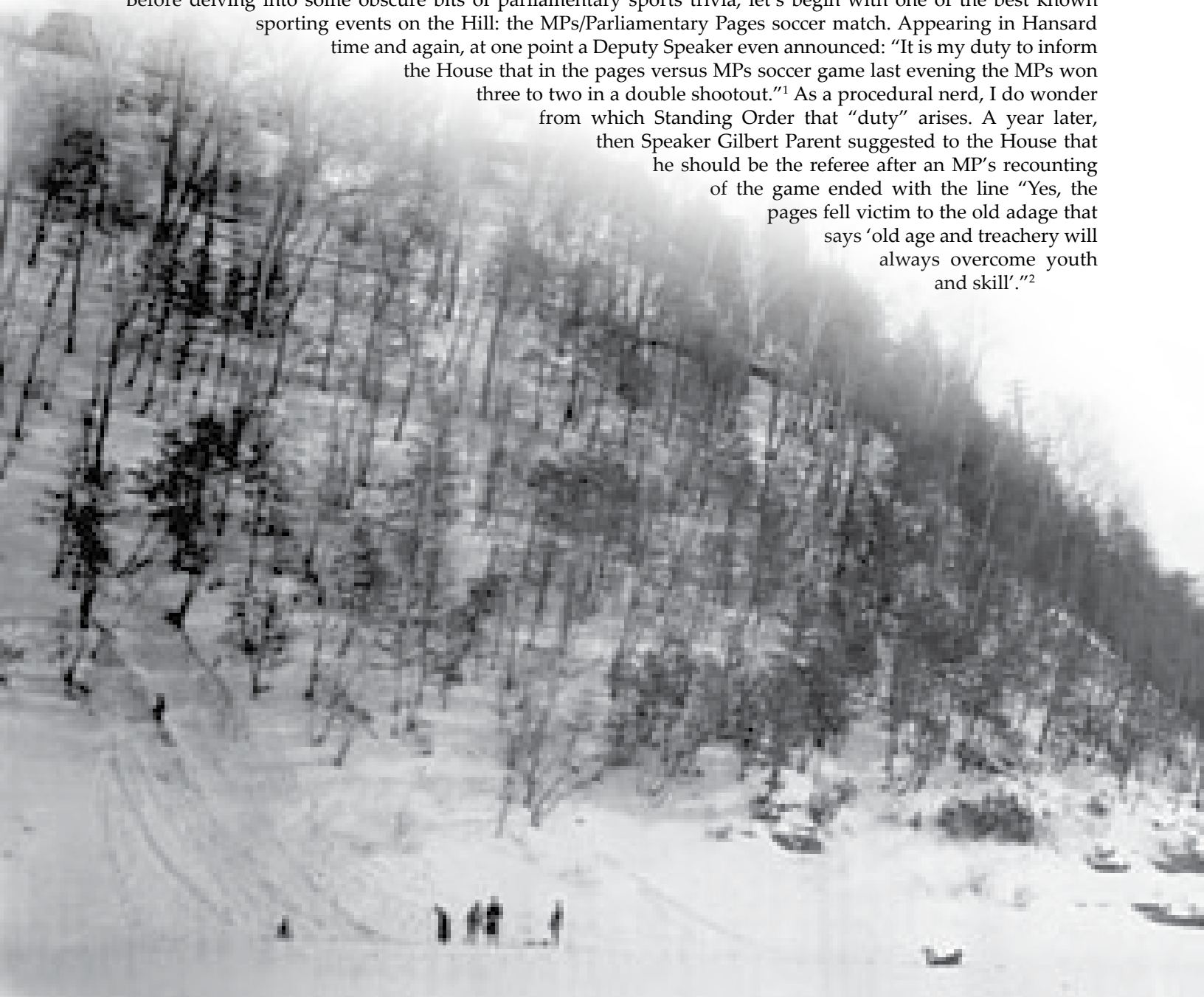
While politicians coming to Canada's Parliament are often said to be 'entering the political arena,' the depth of this sports analogy might surprise you. Sure, certain athletic events involving politicians receive much media attention, such as the famous charity boxing match between then-MP Justin Trudeau and Senator Patrick Brazeau. And yes, some politicians had notable sporting careers before or even during their time in office – MP Red Kelly scored two goals in a Stanley Cup game while serving as an MP! Further, at the time of writing, Parliament includes Canadian gold medalists from the Olympic and Paralympic games. But, there's far more to the story of sports on the Hill. In this article, the author explores how Canada's parliamentary precinct has been a site for celebrating and participating in all sorts of athletic activities.

**Charlie Feldman**

## **Turning Pages**

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Before delving into some obscure bits of parliamentary sports trivia, let's begin with one of the best known sporting events on the Hill: the MPs/Parliamentary Pages soccer match. Appearing in Hansard time and again, at one point a Deputy Speaker even announced: "It is my duty to inform the House that in the pages versus MPs soccer game last evening the MPs won three to two in a double shootout."<sup>1</sup> As a procedural nerd, I do wonder from which Standing Order that "duty" arises. A year later, then Speaker Gilbert Parent suggested to the House that he should be the referee after an MP's recounting of the game ended with the line "Yes, the pages fell victim to the old adage that says 'old age and treachery will always overcome youth and skill'."<sup>2</sup>



The MPs/Pages match also makes for its own interesting set of intriguing stories. For example, one party leader was reportedly spotted changing clothes in the bushes at Rideau Hall after one game,<sup>3</sup> and after another match, an MP explained to the House that “because there were no injuries this year, I can say that it was an unqualified success.”<sup>4</sup> That’s quite the metric of success, especially when you note that an MP once began a speech in the House with:

I would like to begin by explaining to taxpayers why I have a black eye. We were playing soccer yesterday, and although our wonderful pages are kind enough to bring us water here in the House, on the soccer field, things are quite different.<sup>5</sup>

Although soccer is certainly a Hill favourite these days, with MPs having also squared off against the diplomatic corps<sup>6</sup> and the press corps,<sup>7</sup> MPs and Pages once faced off while playing a different sport entirely.

### **A Softball Question**

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Speaker Pierre-François Casgrain was on the field for the Pages-MP softball match in 1936, but given some of the reporting in the *Ottawa Journal* following the game, perhaps he should have served as referee:

The Commoners, managed by Rev. Daniel McIvor (Lib) Fort William, voiced considerable disapproval of the umpiring of Major Millton Fowler Gregg, V.C., sergeant-at-arms, [sic] and Major Drew Thompson, gentleman usher of the Black Rod, brought a pop bottle to throw. He didn’t throw it, though.<sup>8</sup>

Although the Pages emerged victorious with a 13-6 win, players left the field with injuries varying from a sprained ankle to a black eye.<sup>9</sup> Additional reporting tells us that some 500(!) spectators “dropped coppers and nickels into the hat” with the cabinet

contributing \$6 to a grand total of \$27.65 raised.<sup>10</sup> (If you’re curious, the Bank of Canada’s online inflation calculator puts that total figure at around \$610 in 2025 Canadian dollars). The money was reportedly going to purchase sweaters for the victorious Pages.

Softball was once popular enough for MPs to field a team in a league with a schedule. This exchange appeared in Hansard in 1959:

**Mr. R. J. McCleave (Halifax):** Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of tourists and others seeking high class entertainment, could I ask the hon. member for Waterloo North the schedule of this year’s House of Commons softball team?

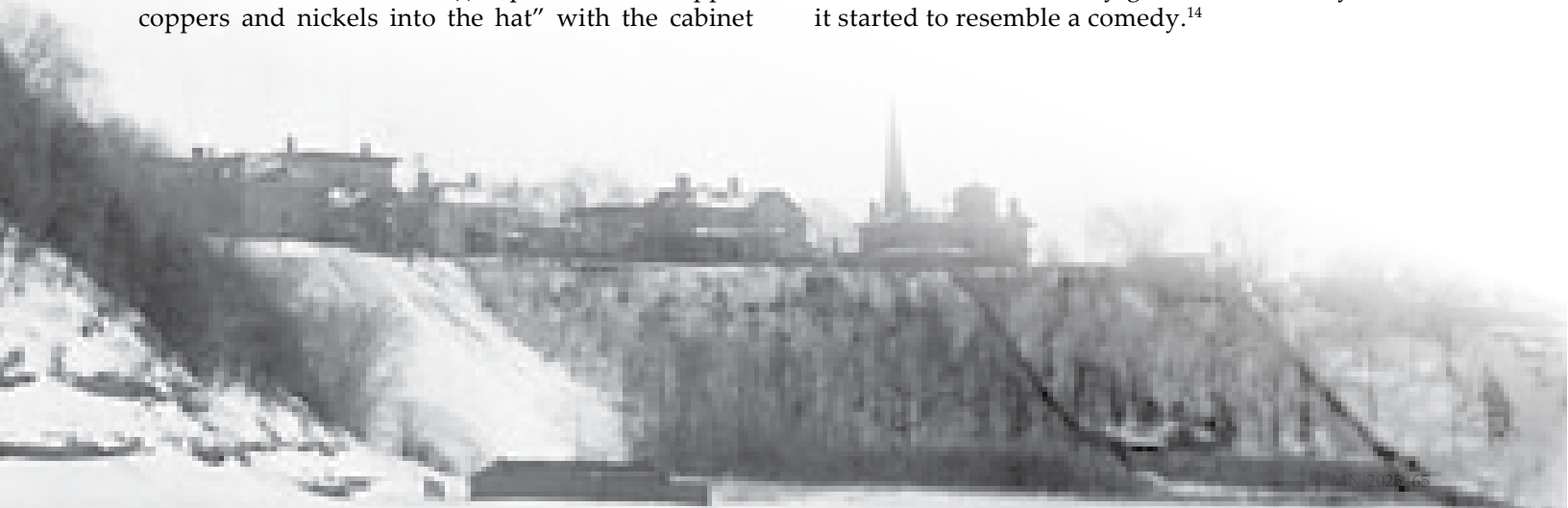
**Mr. O. W. Weichel (Waterloo North):** I may advise the hon. member for Halifax that the first game will be played on Wednesday, June 17 against the protective staff, and on Wednesday, June 24 we shall be playing our friends in the press gallery.

**An hon. Member:** Friends?

**Mr. Speaker:** I am not sure whether this is business of the house or orders of the day.<sup>11</sup>

‘High class entertainment’ is putting it mildly – in various reports, MP Tom Reid would accompany the team by playing the bagpipes “from the Railway Committee Room to the ball diamond on the west lawn of the west block.”<sup>12</sup> And plans were afoot to make these games even more epic. In 1947, the timing would have worked to have visiting US President Truman throw the first pitch!<sup>13</sup> Alas, it didn’t happen. However, Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent did throw the first pitch at the MP-Press Gallery game in 1952.

I should probably note that the quality of gameplay was not necessarily great. In 1958, *Le Droit* reported that the MP-Press Gallery game saw so many errors it started to resemble a comedy.<sup>14</sup>



Though these games could provoke laughs, they often supported a worthwhile cause. The 1950 installment raised funds for victims of flooding in Manitoba.<sup>15</sup> Exceptionally, that game came up in Parliament – the chair of the House’s Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting played a news report of the game for members. The moment was captured in the Minutes this way:

Before proceeding, the Chairman invited the members present to listen to a recorded broadcast of the ball game which took place on Parliament Hill between Members of the Parliament and the Press Gallery. This broadcast was included in Thursday’s News Round-up at 10:15 p.m., and was given by Mr. Hugh Boyd.<sup>16</sup>

In various years, baseball replaced softball as the game of choice. An *Ottawa Citizen* headline from 1913 reads “Home Runs galore on Parliament Hill” and tells of “a crowd which at times numbered several thousand” coming to watch Commons-Press Gallery baseball, adding “And what a game it was.”<sup>17</sup> Players included then Prime Minister Robert Borden.

### **A Motion to Strike (and Maybe a Spare)**

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Headlines from 1948 marked the end of a successful season for another parliamentary sporting league... the House of Commons Bowling League! MPs Hansell and McIvor presided over a ceremony in the parliamentary restaurant where they handed out the Mulock Trophy.<sup>18</sup> Additional reporting indicates that the league included teams consisting of both MPs and secretaries. The Stenos No. 1 Team bested a team of Progressive Conservative MPs during the 1948 season.

While bowling might not be associated with Canada as much as other sports, I feel I must note that five-pin bowling was created by Canadian Thomas E. Ryan.<sup>19</sup>

Press reports in 1951 indicate that the league then had 13 teams.<sup>20</sup> By 1957, league leader (in some reports depending on the year he’s the president, in others he’s the coach) MP Dan McIvor asked the Minister to recommend the league to MPs for their fitness:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Since we have in this house, for the use of the members of the House of Commons and the stenographic staff, an active five-pin bowling league, would the minister not consider it in the best interests of the physical fitness and health of the members to make use of this exercise?<sup>21</sup>

The following year, McIvor would quip that a different Minister should attend one of the league games “and see the value of being able to shoot straight.”<sup>22</sup>

It’s unclear when the bowling league ended precisely. One MP noted in an intervention in Hansard in 1961 that: “about 100 members and their wives, secretaries, messengers, the sergeant-at-arms, the assistant clerk, etc., were members of the bowling league.”<sup>23</sup> That intervention called upon the Minister for Public Works to build better bowling alleys near the parliamentary precinct. The MP explained:

We know that the bowling alleys now at our disposal are so obsolete that several bowlers decided to retire from the league. Therefore, if the minister does not give us bowling alleys, we will not be able to find a sufficient number of bowling fans to play the game next year, as the other bowling alleys are too far away from the parliament buildings.

I therefore repeat my request to the minister that he consider having bowling alleys set up which would make all civil servants and others most happy. I am taking this opportunity of challenging the Minister of Public Works. I am sure he will be a member of the league.<sup>24</sup>

While there’s no evidence that bowling lanes on Parliament Hill were ever seriously contemplated, the question of a bowling alley for employees did create quite a fuss at Ontario’s legislature in 1928.<sup>25</sup>

The reference to civil servants in the 1961 Hansard is notable. In 1909, teams from all over the civil service competed in the Parliamentary Bowling League. In the league standings that year, the Langevin Block Interior Team led while the team from the Royal Mint was securely in second place.<sup>26</sup> Langevin Block might have had a set of very sporty employees around that time -- the year prior it’s reported they defeated a West Block team in a civil service cricket league match.<sup>27</sup>

### **A different kind of green**

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With all this discussion of five-pin bowling, it’s perhaps easy to overlook another type of bowling that once took the Hill by storm: Lawn bowling! An *Ottawa Citizen* article from 1934 reflects on how the Parliamentary Lawn Bowling Club was founded in 1904 when MP A.F. MacLaren had returned from Scotland with a case of bowls. With the help



**On May 12, 2010, Peter MacKay (left) and Justin Trudeau were among 25 MPs and senators who took part in a wheelchair relay race in support of the Canadian Paraplegic Associations’s Spinal Cord Injury and CPA awareness month.**

of colleagues, he approached House of Commons Speaker R.F Sutherland with a proposal to bring the sport to Parliament Hill.<sup>28</sup> Speaker Southerland reportedly greeted the idea enthusiastically and a pitch was established on the west side of the Hill.

The club took hold quickly, and by 1905 news that the Parliamentary Lawn Bowling Club was organizing for the year was heralded as a sign spring had arrived in the capital. A press report noted:

The club is particular about the name lawn bowling, which distinguishes it from other bowling clubs which do not need grass for their

athletic exercises. When the Grounds Committee ropes off the rink and sparrows are forbidden to walk on it except in rubber shoes, spring may be considered to have come to stay.<sup>29</sup>

The following year, a newspaper carried this scoop:

The minister of public works has issued instructions to have the lawn put in shape as speedily as possible. A special cutter has been purchased similar to that used by the clubs in England, and it is the intention to string lights over the lawn in order that the members of the club may be able to play in the evenings.<sup>30</sup>

By 1915, other lawn bowling clubs were using the parliamentary green as well, included a civil service league.<sup>31</sup> A write-up in 1921 tells of a match between “teams from the Bureau of Statistics and Natural Resources Intelligence Branch from the Department of the Interior.”<sup>32</sup> Years before, there was an MP versus civil servants match; the Commoners won 34-17.<sup>33</sup>

From press reports it’s unclear when exactly this particular sporting favourite fell out of fashion for parliamentarians, but much like bowling on the Hill, lawn bowling did not stand the test of time.

### The Sound of Sport

Parliament Hill hosts its share of athletic activities; not all of which involve parliamentarians on a regular basis. One that likely comes to mind for any longtime Ottawa resident was the weekly summer yoga that

would fill the Hill with yogis and sometimes confuse passing tourists.<sup>34</sup> Of course, the occasional MP would stop by. There is even an academic article about the impact of one particular politician’s yoga practice.<sup>35</sup>

Beyond Hill yoga, one Hill sport that’s perhaps more out of mind is also one that’s out of sight... because it doesn’t involve seeing at all!

Beep baseball (beepball) is a version of baseball for blind and visually impaired athletes wherein the ball beeps and bases buzz. In 1991, an exhibition game was held on Parliament Hill.<sup>36</sup> It was followed by a tournament held on Parliament Hill in 1992 “to create awareness of the blind and diabetes as the leading cause of adult blindness.”<sup>37</sup> Notably, the Peace Tower Carillon was set to play *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*,<sup>38</sup> which would have been music to everyone’s ears. By 1994, the tournament was too big for the Hill and moved.



**Honor Octogenarian**—Rev. Dan McIvor, MP for Fort William, may be in his 80th year but he still tosses a mean ball at the pins. Members of the House of Commons Bowling League met in the Maple Leaf Bowling Alleys to pay tribute

to the veteran MP. Above, left to right are: Leonard C. Hill, assistant chief of House of Commons English Journals; Mr. McIvor, Mrs. McIvor, and J. H. Harrison, MP for Meadow Lake, Sask.

—Photo by Newton

Published in the *Ottawa Citizen*, a division of Postmedia Network Inc. Original Photo: Bill and Jean Newton Photography

A one-off event that warrants mention for being a notable first was during Ottawa Pride 2010. Canada's only two gay rugby teams (The Ottawa Wolves and Toronto's Muddy York) faced off on the Parliament Hill lawn.<sup>39</sup> As Parliament does not typically sit in August it is unlikely any parliamentarians attended, but some are apparently quite big rugby fans. In fact, a charity rugby match between the Canadian Forces Rugby team and the Ottawa Irish Rugby Club held in 2009 saw several MPs play. Defence Minister Peter MacKay broke his arm while playing for the Forces,<sup>40</sup> and appeared with his arm in a sling in the House in the days that followed. MacKay had a string of Rugby injuries as he relayed to a reporter in 2001: "Broken my nose five times. Collapsed my eye socket. Broken an eardrum. Dislocated my shoulder and my knees."<sup>41</sup> OUCH!

A much larger rugby match held in 2012 saw several MPs and press gallery members square off with the pros as part of Rugby Canada's Game on the Hill.<sup>42</sup>

Another first that's likely to be a last for quite some time occurred in 2017 when an ice rink was erected on Parliament Hill as part of the Canada 150 celebrations. There was much buzz about whether the NHL might play a game there, as some parliamentarians had urged.<sup>43</sup> The idea gathered steam but was eventually nixed by the Government.<sup>44</sup> However, the Ottawa Senators did play an alumni game on the Parliament Hill ice.<sup>45</sup>

While no parliamentarians skated with the NHLers that night (as far as I can tell), MPs have been known to lace up. Conservative MPs once fielded a team that squared off against a team from the United Way for Charity in an MP's riding.<sup>46</sup> The MP team had a particularly notable hockey coach – Prime Minister Stephen Harper.<sup>47</sup>

Two years later, Conservative MPs would face off on the ice against their Conservative MLA counterparts in Alberta for charity.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, a certain defense minister couldn't play, his arm still recovering from the aforementioned Hill rugby match.

Sometimes the pros and parliamentarians do mix it up, like when pro golfer Stephen Ames and MP Jim Prentice joined forces for a charity golf tournament.<sup>49</sup> The story of golfing on the Hill is largely one of parliamentarians supporting charities, whether it was the Hill Charity Golf Classic in 1996 organized by staff,<sup>50</sup> various charities supported by MPs' efforts,<sup>51</sup> or a senator crusading to combat mental health stigma.<sup>52</sup>



Lyonde, L. / Library and Archives Canada / PA-053766

**Lionel Conacher, a parliamentarian who was also a football and hockey hero.**

When it comes to doing golf for charity, it really seems that Canada's parliamentarians are ... *above par!*

Speaking of politicians and pros mixing it up... the Saskatchewan Roughriders did a walk-through on the Hill in 2015 and were joined by the PM.<sup>53</sup> This wasn't the first CFL event on the Hill: as part of its all-star week in 1974, a kicking contest was held on Parliament Hill.<sup>54</sup> The winner was 14-year-old Chapman Uko, whose prize was to give the kick-off that would "open the game between the Canadian Football League Players' Association All-Stars and the Grey Cup Champion Rough Riders."<sup>55</sup>

### **A Sad Sports Story**

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While this quick look back at some of the sporting history on Parliament Hill was meant to be lighthearted, it has to be said that not every parliamentary athletic moment on the Hill has been all fun and games. A particularly sad story – but one worth remembering

– is that of MP Lionel Conacher. An all-around sportsman, his name appears on both the Grey Cup and the Stanley Cup (one of only three people who could claim that honour, if my pub trivia memory is correct). Conacher was a hero in football and hockey and excelled at all the other sports he played – from baseball to rugby to wrestling.<sup>56</sup> As a parliamentarian who served both provincially and federally, every press report suggests he was an all-around great guy.

MP Conacher's story ends abruptly and sadly. He passed away during a softball<sup>57</sup> game on Parliament Hill that pitted MPs against the Press Gallery, suffering a heart attack shortly after batting a triple.<sup>58</sup> The Prime Minister led tributes in the House the following day, with many members taking part to celebrate the life of a parliamentary sports hero.<sup>59</sup> While there was much sadness in the tributes (he was only 54, had five children, and he was supposed to watch one of his children graduate university the next day), members pointed out that some comfort had to be taken in the fact that he died doing the very thing he loved: playing sports.

While the game took a break for a few years after this tragic incident, parliamentarians decided they needed to play on. In 1958, the game returned to the Hill and Commons Speaker Roland Michener threw the first pitch. Prime Minister Diefenbaker was catcher and opposition leader Pearson was at bat.<sup>60</sup> One has to appreciate that the spirit of camaraderie in sports can prove to transcend partisanship time and again.

That lovely sentiment having been expressed, it may not hold for what happens at the MP gym. A longer *National Post* piece from 2004 tells of MPs working out in caucus clusters and some hoping to avoid political talk only to find it sometimes unescapable, even when MPs are only towel-clad in the change or steam room.<sup>61</sup>

## Conclusion

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From bagpiping in the batters to lawn bowling under string lights, Parliament Hill has been more than just a political arena – it's been a playing field for camaraderie, community, and cause. And parliamentarian athletes have taken many forms - from a Speaker of the Senate being a fencing aficionado<sup>62</sup> (replete with newspaper picture of him practicing his fencing on Parliament Hill behind the Senate<sup>63</sup>) to a former Minister of Justice competing for Canada (while Minister!) at an international tournament in the sport of... ping-pong.<sup>64</sup>

Parliament Hill as a site has played host to many community sporting events over the years - both amateur and professional, serious and silly. On the amateur end are perhaps silly things like the people who dressed up like chess pieces to play a live human chess game on the lawn,<sup>65</sup> to the very serious (after all, we're in Canada!) snow-carving contest that was won by Team Manitoba with a rendering of Louis Riel.<sup>66</sup> When the pros came to town they did all sorts of things, including a whiffle ball match played by members of the Ottawa Senators hockey, Lynx baseball and Rough Riders football teams.<sup>67</sup>

Sport on Parliament Hill hasn't always been headline-making, but in a place where division can dominate, it's worth celebrating the rare events that bring people together on common ground – even if that ground happens to be carefully manicured lawn turf, and even if some parliamentarian sporting moments on the Hill lawn might be suspected of being more for the love of the photo-op than the love of the game.<sup>68</sup>

Let's hope future generations of parliamentarians continue to find time to play together, especially on Parliament Hill.<sup>69</sup>

## Notes

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- 1 *Debates of the House of Commons*, 36th Parliament, 1st Session, p. 7598, June 4, 1998.
- 2 *Debates of the House of Commons*, 36th Parliament, 1st Session, p. 15801, June 3, 1999.
- 3 "Day's Latest Undercover Operation." *The Toronto Star*, June 11, 2001, p. A6.
- 4 *Debates of the House of Commons*, 42nd Parliament, 1st Session, p. 11840, June 1, 2017.
- 5 *Debates of the House of Commons*, 41st Parliament, 1st Session, no. 250, May 9, 2013, p. 16570.
- 6 *Debates of the House of Commons*, 37th Parliament, 2nd Session, p. 400, 7 Oct. 2002. "My hon. colleague from Edmonton—Strathcona was talking about soccer and the fact that there will be a game on Wednesday evening. The diplomats here in Ottawa from the European Union will be playing against a number of us MPs.
- 7 "Soccer on Canada's Parliament Hill." *Canada Soccer*, 20 May 2015, <https://canadasoccer.com/news/soccer-on-canadas-parliament-hill/>.
- 8 "Pages Tame Members of Commons in Parliament Ball Game." *Calgary Herald*, 5 June 1936, p. 8.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 "Black eye and sprained ankle toll in pages' 13-6 win over commoners." *The Ottawa Journal*, 5 June 1936, p. 13.
- 11 *Debates of the House of Commons*, 24th Parl., 2nd sess., vol. 4, 11 June 1959, p. 4562.

- 12 "House of Commons Softball Squad Meets RA Tonight." *The Ottawa Journal*, June 5, 1946, p. 19.
- 13 "President Invited to Hit First Ball." *The Evening Times Globe* (Saint John, NB), 10 June 1947, p. 23.
- 14 Le droit, 7 August 1958, pg 3, photo caption.
- 15 "Ministres, députés et journalistes aux prises sur la Colline: 15 à 6." *Le Droit*, 9 juin 1950, p. 1.
- 16 House of Commons Committees, 21st Parliament, 2nd Session: Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting, vol. 1, page 285, Minutes of Proceedings, June 9, 1950.
- 17 "Home Runs Galore on Parliament Hill." *The Ottawa Citizen*, 2 May 1913, p. 9.
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Above: The 2024-2025 Pages team came ready to play. Below: In 2011, the Library of Parliament hosted The Games: A Moment of Pride, an exhibit showcasing torches and medals from the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.



