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Laval Police Service canine unit calendars now on sale



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Officers with the Laval Police Service, including the K-9 unit, are seen here with representatives from the Fondation Martin-Matte at LPS headquarters where the 2027 version of the ever-popular dog handlers calendar was recently launched. (Photo: Courtesy of Laval Police Service)

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Communauto expands FLEX car-sharing service to Laval's Pont-Viau sector

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
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Residents of Pont-Viau can now access Communauto's FLEX car-sharing service, giving Laval its first free-floating car-sharing zone and expanding transportation options around the Cartier metro station.

The new service, announced jointly by the City of Laval and Communauto on Oct. 22, allows users to locate, unlock and drive available vehicles through a mobile app without making a reservation or returning the vehicle to its point of departure.

Unlike Communauto's traditional station-based service, which requires users to reserve a vehicle in advance and return it to the same location, FLEX operates on a free-floating model. Vehicles can be picked up and left anywhere within designated service zones that now connect Laval to Montréal and Longueuil.

The launch represents a significant expansion of car-sharing in Laval, where Communauto has operated since 2010. The company currently maintains 58 vehicles across 37 stations in the city.

Marco Viviani, Communauto's vice-president of strategic development, said demand for shared mobility has surged in Laval over the past year, making the FLEX expansion a logical next step.

According to Viviani, membership in Laval's station-based network has more than doubled over the last year, rising from roughly 1,200 users at the beginning of 2025 to approximately 2,700 today.



Christine Poirier, Laval councillor for Pont-Viau, and Marco Viviani, vice-president of strategic development at Communauto, stand beside a Communauto FLEX vehicle. (Photo: Alessandro Commisso, The Laval News)

"The interest in the service is much higher," he said, adding that the company expects the new FLEX zone to attract hundreds of additional users over time.

Communauto recently increased the number of vehicles available in its free-floating network by several hundred cars, which Viviani said will help ensure adequate vehicle availability as the service expands into Laval.

The company sees the new zone as a complement to existing transportation options rather than a replacement for them. With the FLEX area centred around the Cartier metro station, users can combine car-sharing with public transit, walking and cycling depending on their travel needs.

Viviani said studies show that one shared vehicle can replace approximately 10 privately owned cars while helping users reduce their personal vehicle use significantly.

"People have the car when they really need it," he said. "They can rely on walking, biking or transit when it's more suitable."

City officials say the choice of Pont-Viau as Laval's first FLEX zone was deliberate.

Councillor Christine Poirier, who represents Pont-Viau and serves on Laval's executive committee, said the area's high population density and direct access to the metro made it a natural starting point.

"We have more and more citizens who are coming to live in this area, and we want them to be less dependent on cars," said Christine Poirier.

Poirier added that reducing pressure on neighbourhood parking was also a consideration. Because FLEX vehicles can be parked throughout the designated operating area, users do not require the special parking permit needed for some other car-sharing services.

The city is also continuing to encourage residents to try car-sharing through a financial incentive program. Laval offers a subsidy of up to $250 to residents who join Communauto, funding that can be applied toward membership plans or usage costs. The program is supported through funding from Quebec's Ministry of the Environment.

"We're really happy to offer it to all of our citizens," said Poirier. "It gives them one more opportunity for new mobility within the city."

Poirier said the subsidy is intended to encourage residents to explore alternatives to private vehicle ownership while expanding mobility options available throughout the city.

Communauto's FLEX service is now available in the Pont-Viau sector near the Cartier metro station.



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OPINION & Editorial

Is humanity a failed experiment?

Until peace trumps war, the world continues to unravel in senseless death and destruction

War is hell. Although most of us cannot speak of it from personal experience, having been spared the direct vile effects of air, sea, or ground combat. Yet none of us is exempted from knowing about, and having directly or indirectly suffered the loss of loved ones in battlefields too numerous to mention. For some the grief can be traced to the 20th Century, for others, such as the family of Sergeant Christos Karigiannis, the unending grief flows from a more recent source, in Afghanistan; the memory of the sacrifice he made lingers in mind, heart and soul each and every day they face the reality of a loved son and brother lost.

Not all losses are suffered in combat. Some tragedies happen to men and women in uniform. Four heroes in uniform who were preparing to serve, lost their lives last month in the tragic accident that killed them and wounded 39 others at Canadian Forces Bases Wainwright in Alberta. For the families of Pte. Aiden Goulding, Pte. Hayden Lykkemark, Sgt. Morgan Wong, and Pte. Shaun Farrell the pain is new and fresh.

These four young men, the eldest of whom was 26, were part of a combat arms unit preparing for an upcoming NATO deployment in Latvia, thousands of miles from home. All four were part of the 3rd Battalion of the Princess Patricia Light Infantry regiment.

Our own Laval son, Christos Karigiannis, was also a proud member of the PPCIL's 3rd Battalion, when he and fellow soldiers Cpl. Stephen Bouzane and Pte. Joel Wiebe was killed in action in Afghanistan on July 20, 2007 as their armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb.

Yes, true enough, and most appropriately, Sgt. Christos was magnificently honoured by Laval Liberty High School in November of 2008, on the lawn of 3200 Souvenir Blvd. where he had attended Chomedey Polyvalent High School 14 years earlier. A modest but symbolic plaque to his heroism has graced the sight all these years. If you haven't seen the miniature monument, take a moment this Remembrance 2026 to pause in front of what is now Laval Senior Academy to think of the sacrifice Christos made, alongside millions of others who paid the ultimate price in defense of the freedoms and liberties we enjoy.

At the November 2007 inauguration of the modest monument, Christos's mother Nicky put it best, in honour of her son and the sons and daughters of countless other families throughout history: "I hurt every minute of every day for the loss of my son, but I'm not bitter, sad yes, but also peaceful in my heart that Chris did what he loved to do most, serve."

With ceaseless respect for the legacy bequeathed future generations by Col. John McCrae, who in his World War 1 eulogy to war and peace – In Flanders Fields - poured out his heart to the heroes of humanity who he knew would make ultimate sacrifices for centuries to come, we cite the self-declared admonition that he and his generation had failed ... To you from failing hands we throw the torch... a warning to every future soldier's inheritance, that it will be up to him or her to accept the responsibility of putting on the uniform and climbing into a jet-fighter, a submarine, a destroyer, in the service of others.

No Dr. McCrae, your generation did not fail in its quest to preserve, protect, promote and defend, to the ultimate sacrifice of giving up life or limb so that we could enjoy the fruits of all that's worth living for, and sadly, dying for - life, liberty, and yes the pursuit of happiness in a broken world of death, destruction, and human waste.

You and your brothers-in-arms did not have to atone for failure to end the atrocities of misguided human beings who saw and continue to see war as a solution to the divisions that bring on wars.

It is the heart-of-darkness that causes humanity irreparable harm, no matter what filters are used by historians, revisionists, politicians, military leaders, churches, governments, and terrorist organizations to sanitize the horrors of war.

What despicable and fruitless use of human intelligence to justify the necessity to wreak chaos, produce mayhem, and condone the ultimate sin against humanity – killing other human beings because they are the other side.

As we approach the annual day (in truth, actually the moment of silence) on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day) of the commemoration of the sacrifice made by the millions of young men and women who took up the torch from failings hands... it bears to be reminded that the death and destruction is nothing new. Buffy Ste. Marie got it when she composed and sung the psalm of the universal soldier...He's five foot two and he's six feet-four, he fights with missiles and spears, he's all of 31 and he's only 17, been a soldier for a thousand years.

Yes, he fought for Caesar, and he's fighting for Zelenskyy and Putin, for Palestine, for Israel, Lebanon, Iran, and dozens of others in numerous civil wars.

So, in our two-minute silent commemoration on the eleventh-hour of the eleventh-day of the eleventh- month let's ask as Pete Seeger did... Where have all the flowers gone, long-time passing, where have all the young men (and young women) gone for soldiers everyone, where have all the soldiers gone, gone to graveyards everyone, where have all the graveyards gone, covered with flowers everyone.

Yes, it's precious, purifying, and purposeful to wear a poppy for fallen heroes of every war ever fought, to mourn all who have died in battle, including millions of innocent civilians.

But it would be infinitely more helpful to search for peace within ourselves, passing it on to others out of love for our families, our neighbourhoods, our communities, and our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Renata Isopo

Letter to the Editor

Dear editor,

The last few years have been very annoying and ultimately frustrating time and time again.

I am a 77 year old male caring for my health. Appointments to the hospitals and CLSCs, have been terrible. The waiting times have been ridiculously long and although the whole time waiting is bad enough, the patients with the sneezing, coughing, runny noses, and/or flu and measles symptoms make this is a breeding ground for passing on whatever the patient is there for.

Please, please what can we do to make sure hospitals and CLSCs enforce MANDATORY MASKS as soon as anyone enters the medical buildings.

Thank you for letting me vent.

Charles Mahar

See another letter on p.22

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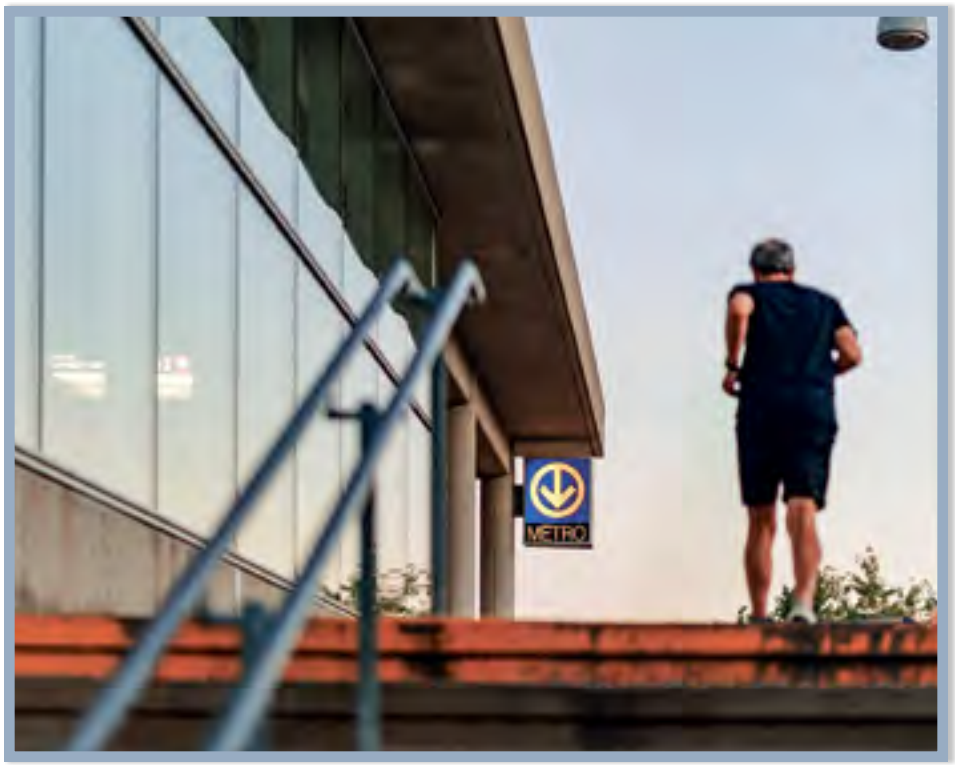
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By Martin C. Barry

Laval takes the lead to advance case for Metro Orange Line extension



In an effort to advance the case for extending the western branch of the Montreal Metro Orange Line into Laval, the City of Laval has awarded a mandate to Systra Canada to conduct a comprehensive ridership study.

The step, approved by Laval city council on October 6, "marks the start of a strategic analysis essential to realizing what would become one of the most important and unifying transportation projects in Quebec," the city said last week in a statement.

"In a context of tight public finances, it is important to choose transportation projects that will move the most people within the territory and that have the greatest economic potential," said Laval city councillor for Vimont Pierre Brabant, who is responsible for public transit and chairs the Société de transport de Laval.

Alleviating traffic congestion

"With Autoroute 15 and Autoroute 40, which is the busiest in Quebec, the extension of the Orange Line to the west would directly alleviate traffic congestion in the Montreal region and improve the quality of life for residents of the region," he added.

Far from simply projecting travel patterns, according to Brabant, the study will assess the potential impact of new Metro stations on Laval's residential, commercial and institutional development.

He said the study will complement a separate study conducted by the Metropolitan Regional Transportation Authority (ARTM), whose results are expected to be released soon.

Projected over a 30-year horizon, the City of Laval says its analysis will quantify the expected benefits not only for future users of the Metro network, but also for the overall urban and economic development of the metropolitan area, as well as the potential tax revenue.

Ongoing efforts continue

According to the city, the launch of the study is a direct continuation of numerous initiatives already started by Laval mayor Stéphane Boyer. The city's ongoing efforts have emphasized the crucial importance of the extension in directly addressing current challenges, including the need for sustainable mobility, the issue of traffic congestion and the growing need for housing through the creation of densified living environments.

The City of Laval says it has partnered with six major landowners in the area targeted for the Metro extension in order to carry out the project without expropriation costs. The city claims this "unprecedented initiative in Quebec" could save approximately $1 billion on the Orange Line extension project's cost.

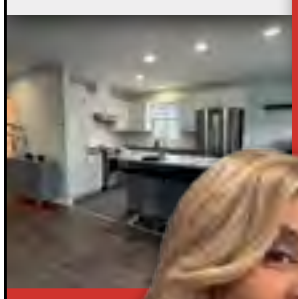
The city says results of the study, conducted by Systra Canada experts, combined with the City of Laval's urban development projections, "will allow for a rigorous strengthening of the project's business case to support upcoming government decisions."

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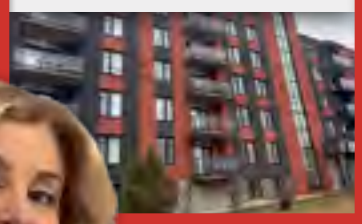
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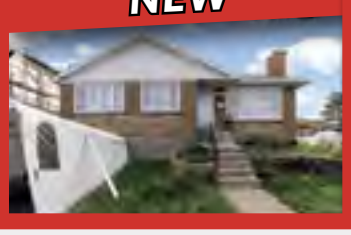


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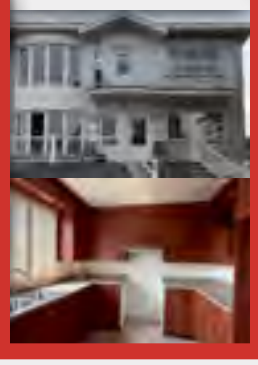
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Laval and the Rocket unite for the 53rd Blood Drive

A community effort to save lives

NEWSFIRST MULTIMEDIA
info@newsfirst.ca

The City of Laval is once again rallying its residents for a major act of solidarity as the 53rd edition of the Lavalloises and Lavallois Blood Drive returns on November 24 at Place Bell. Organized in collaboration with HémaQuébec and the Laval Rocket, the event aims to collect 550 blood donations, reinforcing its status as one of Québec's most significant annual blood drives.



Acting Mayor Ray Khalil emphasized the spirit behind the initiative, describing it as "an exceptional demonstration of civic solidarity." He added that the partnership with HémaQuébec and the Rocket reflects a unified commitment to a shared mission: "On November 24, I invite residents to come out in great numbers to Place Bell and take part in this meaningful gesture that truly makes a difference."

This year's event offers donors not only the chance to save lives but also the opportunity to meet Laval Rocket players and municipal elected officials. The Rocket's head coach, Daniel Jacob, highlighted the team's pride in contributing to the cause: "It is a privilege for the Laval Rocket organization to once again join forces with the City of Laval and HémaQuébec for an initiative that is especially close to our hearts." Reflecting on last year's turnout, he noted, "I witnessed firsthand the generosity and mobilization of Laval residents. We look forward to meeting you on November 24 at Place Bell and contributing once again to the success of this important event."

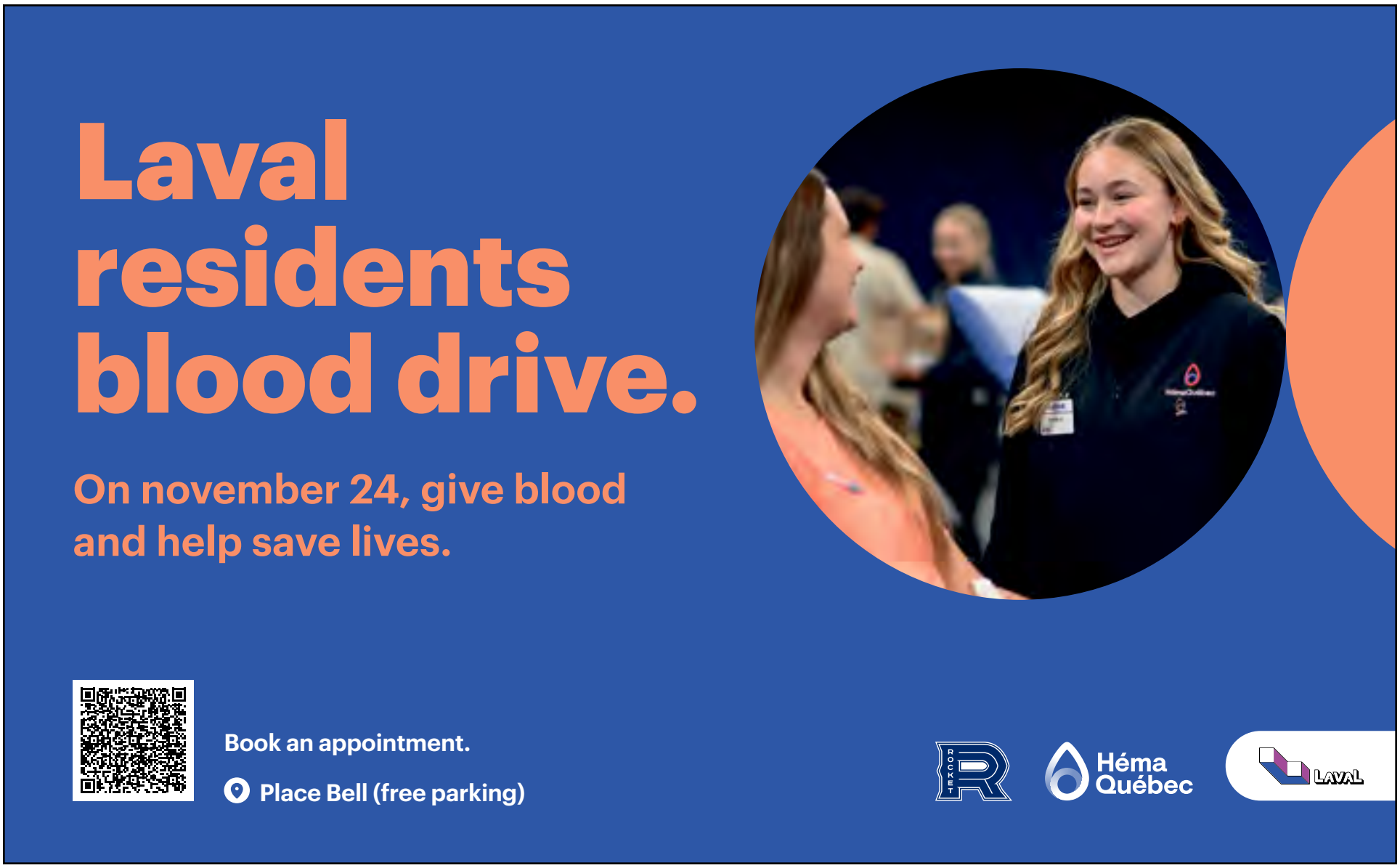
How to participate

Most healthy adults are eligible to donate blood. Residents can reserve their appointment online or by calling 18003437264, with time slots available from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Walkins will also be accepted throughout the day.

To confirm eligibility, donors may visit hemaquebec.ca/don-sang or call 18008472525.

A community effort with provincewide impact

For HémaQuébec, the Laval blood drive plays a crucial role in meeting daily provincial needs. Faouzi Rezagui, event planning advisor at HémaQuébec, underscored the importance of local participation: "In Québec, 1,000 blood donations are needed every day. Thanks to your mobilization, 60% of these needs can be met right here in Laval." He encouraged residents to join the effort, saying, "We are counting on everyone's commitment and generosity to make this 53rd edition another success. With or without an appointment, join us on November 24. Together, let's make a difference — every donation counts."



Pink in the City's 20th anniversary gala raises funds for breast cancer support

Nearly 800 guests partied during a gala evening benefiting MUHC's Breast Clinic

MARTIN C. BARRY
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
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In an effort to keep up with the struggle against breast cancer, more than 800 supporters of Pink in the City partied the night away at this year's Magic of Hope gala, helping to keep the flame of hope alive.

The guests turned out at the Château Royal in Chomedey on the evening of October 23 to have a little fun, enjoy a gourmet meal, listen and dance to some exciting music, and answer the call to help raise an anticipated $325,000 for the benefit of patients at the McGill University Health Centre's Breast Clinic.



Members of the Rhapsody Orchestra are seen here performing at Pink in the City's 20th anniversary gala at the Château Royal in Laval on October 23. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)



Pink in the City co-founder and president Denise Vourtzoumis (speaking) is seen here with other family members as well as leading supporters of the breast cancer research cause during the 2026 gala fundraiser held at the Château Royal in Chomedey on October 23. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

"For me, Pink in the City has always been about the people," said Pink in the City president and co-founder Denise Vourtzoumis. "It is about the power of community, the strength that we find in one another, and the understanding that none of us should ever have to face life's most difficult moments alone."



Among the notable guests at Pink in the City's 2026 fundraising gala were newly-elected Liberal MNA for Vimont-Auteuil Louis Ialenti (left), Canadian Senator Leo Housakos and his spouse Demi Papapanagiotou. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

Helping provide support

Pink in the City's mission is to support breast cancer patients, survivors and their families through fundraising, education, wellness initiatives and patient-centered care. Through events, partnerships, and community engagement, Pink in the City helps fund programs that address not only treatment, but also the emotional, physical, and social well-being of those on their breast cancer journey.

"This is all about good will and all about the community coming together in order to support this most wonderful cause," Senator Leo Housakos, who was among the notable guests, said in an interview with Newsfirst Multimedia.

"Pink in the City's been around for a long time now, going year after year," he continued. "What everyone should remember is that if they haven't touched by cancer yet, they will be at some point. Congratulations to the Vourtzoumis family who have raised tons of money for breast cancer research at the MUHC."

A network of hope

"It's always a pleasure to support, as a personal donor, Pink in the City," said Senator Tony Lofreda, also a notable guest. "This is a great cause that brings people together, gives the community hope, and provides survivors with a network of hope, which is so important. We need to support great causes like this and I feel privileged and honored to do so."

Pink in the City was founded in 2006 when an 11-year-old Lawrence Vourtzoumis, while driving to school with his mother Denise, heard an ad on the radio requesting volunteers to shave their heads as a demonstration of solidarity for those who had lost their hair due to chemo treatments for breast cancer.

He was captivated by the idea and asked his mother if he could participate. He wanted to shave his head to show support, which was a pretty brave thing for a pre-teen to do. Denise agreed and helped Lawrence raise the required amount of money to be able to participate.

Millions raised for MUHC

Two decades and many fundraising gala evenings later, Pink in the City has raised millions for the MUHC Foundation, which remits funds to the McGill University Health Centre's Breast Clinic Wellness Program.

Pink in the City started as a single event. This heightened an already existing awareness about breast cancer in the community and the need to support those who had been touched by the disease. It also embedded the idea that every selfless gesture of support makes a difference.

Over time, volunteers, sponsors, partners and medical advisors allowed Pink in the City to attain and exceed its goals. Community partners have also played a key role by supporting and attending Pink in the City's various functions and events. Partnerships have extended to leadership programs at Laval-area high schools through the Model the Way program.



A lucky raffle winner had the chance to leave Pink in the City's 20th anniversary gala with a free one-year lease for this Volvo SUV. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)



Quebec Liberal Party holds its first caucus meeting in Laval

After eight years, all six Laval ridings are held by PLQ MNAs again

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On October 22, the day after elected members of the Quebec National Assembly took the oath of office in Quebec City, the Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ) held its first caucus meeting in Laval, a region that elected an all-Quebec Liberal slate in the island's six provincial ridings.

For the first time in eight years, all six Laval ridings are represented by MNAs belonging to the PLQ.

Starting a new mandate

In statement, the new Laval PLQ MNAs said they were proud to welcome their colleagues and the PLQ leader, Charles Milliard, to the first caucus meeting.

"The gathering marked the beginning of a new mandate and demonstrated the Liberal elected officials' commitment to joining forces to defend the interests of the people of Laval," the PLQ said in the statement.

"This election result marks a strong comeback for the Liberal Party of Quebec (PLQ) in the region and allows Laval to count on a team of six united and determined MNAs ready to make its voice heard in the National Assembly," they continued.

Laval's importance in Quebec

"Whether it's health, housing, education or mobility, the concerns of Laval residents will be at the heart of their priorities," the Quebec Liberals said.

"By choosing Laval to hold its first caucus, the PLQ reaffirms the importance it places on the region and its commitment to leveraging the strength of its new parliamentary team to advance the issues that matter to citizens," they added.

Laval's six Quebec Liberal members of the National Assembly (MNAs) are Madeleine Féquière (Chomedey); Marie Claude Fournier (Fabre); Caroline De Guire (Laval-des-Rapides); Virginie Dufour (Mille-Îles) (Dufour being the lone PLQ incumbent re-elected in Laval); Cécile Tremblay (Sainte-Rose); and Louis Ialenti (Vimont-Auteuil).

What comes next?

The Quebec Liberals now have a firm 39 seats in the National Assembly (with a 40th currently the focus of a judicial recount). Meanwhile, the minority Parti Québécois government has 60 seats in the 125-seat assembly.

The last time the Parti Québécois were in power following the 2012 election they had 54 seats. However, they failed to hold onto the confidence of the National Assembly, leading to another election just two years later.

By the time of that 2014 election, the Quebec Liberals had managed to rebuild their strength following former PLQ leader Jean Charest's humiliating defeat in the 2012 election (when he lost in his own riding in Sherbrooke).

PLQ surged back in 2014

In 2014 under new PLQ leader Philippe Couillard, the Quebec Liberals won a majority government of 70 seats. In the meantime, the incumbent Parti Québécois finished second with 30 seats, becoming the first single-term government since Jean-Jacques Bertrand's Union Nationale government was defeated in 1970.

As well, the PQ's April 2014 electoral defeat (and Pauline Marois's personal electoral loss in her Charlevoix–Côte-de-Beaupré riding) marked the shortest stay of any Quebec provincial government since Canadian Confederation, according to a 2014 post-election account of the defeat written by former Montreal Gazette political columnist Don MacPherson.



Seen here are (from the left) Quebec Liberal Party leader Charles Milliard, Mille-Îles MNA Virginie Dufour, Fabre MNA Marie Claude Fournier, Chomedey MNA Madeleine Féquière), Laval-des-Rapides MNA Caroline De Guire, Sainte-Rose MNA Cécile Tremblay and Vimont-Auteuil MNA Louis Ialenti at the Quebec National Assembly in Quebec City shortly after recently being sworn into office.



Laval and Montreal's Hellenics gather to mark 86 years since Greece said 'Ohi'

Archbishop Apostolos and Greece's ambassador-designate in Canada among guests

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His Eminence Archbishop Apostolos of Canada, surrounded by students of the Hellenic Community's Socrates Demosthenes schools.

On the calendar followed by many people of Greek origin, October is always an important month, as it contains two key dates that shaped the future of the modern Greek state while also adding to the determination of the Greek people to live in freedom.

Hundreds of the Montreal region's Greeks joined Hellenic community leaders as well as elected officials for a ceremonial event at the Palace in Laval on October 24 marking the 86th anniversary of the day during World War II when Greece stood up against its occupation by Axis military forces.

But an equally-important date was also being observed. In October 28 years earlier, Greek armed forces took the city of Thessaloniki back from Ottoman occupiers. The celebrations were especially important this year as the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal is currently marking its 120th anniversary.

Greece said 'no' to fascism

Ohi Day is celebrated throughout Greece, Cyprus and in Greek communities around the world every year to commemorate the refusal by Greek Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas to accept an ultimatum presented by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini on Oct. 28, 1940.

The ultimatum was presented to Metaxas by the Italian ambassador to Greece. It demanded that Greece allow Axis forces to enter Greek territory and occupy certain strategic locations, or otherwise face war. The name for the day comes from Metaxas' straightforward reply. "No," he is reputed to have said curtly, following which he added, "then it is war."

In response, Italian troops stationed in Albania, which was an Italian protectorate at the time, attacked the Greek border, marking the beginning of Greece's involvement in World War II. On the morning of Oct. 28, Greeks took to the streets, irrespective of political affiliation, shouting "Ohi." Since 1942, it has been a national celebration.



From left Costas Milonopoulos former president of The Greek Orthodox Community of Laval, Ambassador of Greece To Canada his excellency Vasileios (Vassilios) Vikas, His Eminence Archbishop Apostolos of Canada and Chomedey city coumcillor Aglaia Revelakis.

Dignitaries and officials

Dignitaries who attended this year's commemoration, sponsored by the HCGM, included Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Canada Apostolos, who was recently enthroned in Toronto, as well as ambassador-designate for the Republic of Greece in Canada Vassilis Vikas, and consul general for Greece in Montreal Nikolaos Karalekas.

Among the other officials present were Vimy Liberal MP Annie Koutrakis, Saint-Laurent MP Emmanuella Lambropoulos, Montreal borough councillor for Claude-Ryan district Georgia Haloulos, Laval city councillor for Chomedey Aglaia Revelakis and HCGM president Basile Angelopoulos.

Among other things Archbishop Apostolos noted in an address, he said it was important during the HCGM's 120th anniversary year to pay respects to the pioneers and founders of the Montreal Greek community who arrived under very difficult conditions but still managed to establish a church, schools and a cohesive community.

Values and principles

In interviews with Newsfirst Multimedia, several of the dignitaries weighed in on the significance of the gathering. "This reminds us why it's so important to stand up for our values and our principles to make sure that we remain strong and united to leave the next generation something to build on," said Koutrakis.

"If it wasn't for the heroes of the 1940s who gave us our freedom we wouldn't be here," said Revelakis. "We honor our heroes and recall their names while remembering their struggle within our community," said Lambropoulos.

The HCGM's president was especially grateful for the presence of Archbishop Apostolos on such an auspicious occasion. "We are blessed to be able to have with us the new archbishop who was recently enthroned," said Angelopoulos. "On his first trip outside of the Toronto area, he is here with us tonight in order to celebrate this milestone."



From left Maira Myrogianni, Secretary General for Greeks Abroad and Public Diplomacy of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, His Eminence Archbishop Apostolos of Canada, and Annie Koutrakis, Member of Parliament for Vimy and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families.



CHOC domestic violence group launches latest campaign

'His violence is your business,' is Laval-based CHOC's slogan

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On October 19 for a third and final year, the CHOC (Carrefour d'hommes en changement) organization based in Laval launched a bold regional awareness campaign on the prevention of domestic violence.

The organization says that it stands committed through the campaign to an innovative approach, targeting and encouraging others to learn more about the prevention of domestic violence.

The CHOC organization, established in Laval for over 40 years (since 1985), specializes in providing support and intervention for men. Its mandate is to provide specialized services to men who perpetrate domestic violence and/or are suicidal.

Stopping domestic violence

Furthermore, for over 25 years the organization has involved "close ones" or "significant others" in suicide prevention among men. Now, the organization says it will also work closely with the significant others of domestic violence perpetrators to support and equip them to act appropriately and safely with the shared goal of preventing domestic violence.

The terms "close ones" and "significant others" refers to a relative, friend or colleague who witnesses or is affected by a situation of domestic violence, and who wishes to get involved and play a significant role with a perpetrator of domestic violence, with the aim of encouraging them to seek help and ultimately stop using violence.



A targeted campaign

CHOC says the latest campaign is aimed at "close ones" who through advertising messages will be invited to contact the CHOC organization by phone or via a QR code leading to the CHOC website (www.organismechoc.com/lesproches/). These people will then be put in touch with CHOC staff to properly prepare them to refer the perpetrator of domestic violence.

This preparation can be done either through a telephone interview or an individual meeting. Anyone wishing to get involved will receive a guide designed specifically for them and will also be able to benefit from support for their involvement.

Campaign until November 13

The campaign runs from October 19 to November 13. During the campaign period, Laval residents will be able to view a 30-second video and banner ads on several online media platforms, thanks to CHOC's partners: Bell Media, COGECO, CORUS and TVR Laval, as well as La Presse, Le Devoir and the Journal de Montréal.

The campaign is made possible thanks to financial support from the Secretariat for the Status of Women. Since domestic violence is a social issue that remains relevant today, the CHOC organization invites everyone to share the news about its campaign and thanks supporters for getting out the word about their slogan: Preventing domestic violence – it's everyone's responsibility!







Remembrance Day

NOVEMBER 11

Courage remembered and honoured

An easy way to honour our veterans

From the last Friday in October until November 11, Canadians are encouraged to purchase and wear a poppy. This is an easy way to show you remember those who died for their country. Additionally, donating to the Poppy Campaign directly supports Canadian veterans and their families.

Where do your poppy dollars go?

Wearing a poppy is a good way to not only pay tribute to Canada's veterans but also to give back to them. The poppies sold every year in the weeks leading up to Remembrance Day are provided by the Royal Canadian Legion, who use the money collected to provide assistance to veterans. Here are some of the excellent uses to which this organization puts donations collected for Remembrance Day.

VETERAN TRANSITION PROGRAMS

For many veterans, returning to civilian life proves to be a challenge. They confront estranged connections with friends and family, feelings of isolation, difficulties adapting to new workplaces and mental illnesses like depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Royal Canadian Legion helps fund the Veterans Transition Network, a program that assists veterans through the tumultuous period after leaving active duty, providing them with helpful tools and resources as well as a welcoming community.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND HOUSING FOR VETERANS

Some veterans have an especially difficult time adjusting to civilian life and end up homeless or at risk of homelessness. In addition to providing financial support to such individuals, the Legion supports numerous outreach programs, food banks, drop-in centres and meals-on-wheels programs.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

The Legion provides funds for medical equipment, medical training and medical treatment focused on caring for injured and infirm veterans. It also helps pay for accessibility modifications that assist veterans with disabilities.

EDUCATIONAL BURSARIES

The Legion grants bursaries to children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of veterans who require financial assistance to be able to pursue a post-secondary education.

REMEMBRANCE ACTIVITIES

With the help of our donations, the Legion finances activities that shine a light on our past and commemorate our veterans.

Un message de vos élus

Remembrance Day
In honour of those who served



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conseil municipal | LAVAL

United we stand,
as we pause to remember

November 11

Remembrance Day



Honouring fallen service members, respecting peace

In Canada, November 11 marks Remembrance Day. On this day, the government, veterans, organizations and the public pay tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of freedom and peace. Given these uncertain times, it's more significant now than ever.

EVOLVING SIGNIFICANCE

Remembrance Day was originally established to commemorate the signing of the 1918 Armistice, which ended the fighting in World War I. During that major conflict, more than 66,000 Canadians lost their lives, and more than 170,000 were wounded.

Over the decades and as other conflicts have erupted around the world, the event has also become a day to honour the broader Canadian military effort and the brave individuals who serve. Every year, ceremonies and various activities take place across the country, notably in Ottawa, where dignitaries lead the traditional two-minute silence nationwide in memory of those who have fallen.

DUTY TO REMEMBER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

In addition to highlighting the crucial role of Canadian troops in maintaining world peace, Remembrance Day serves as a reminder that peace is fragile. As current political and economic upheavals contribute to global conflict, initiatives that facilitate lasting peace are crucial for the well-being of future generations.

This year, participate in Remembrance Day activities organized in your area, or watch the national commemorative ceremony live on television. You can also pay your respects by wearing a poppy and observing two minutes of silence.

11 NOVEMBRE

JOUR DU SOUVENIR

À jamais gravé dans nos coeurs

NOVEMBER 11

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Forever in our hearts



FAYÇAL
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Keeping our fiscal powder dry

Why rising public debt leaves canada less prepared for the next crisis

CHRISTOPHER RAGAN, C.D. HOWE INSTITUTE

Canadian federal and provincial governments have been running significant budget deficits in recent years, gradually increasing their net debt-to-GDP ratios (TD Economics 2026a). As Figure 1 shows, the total provincial debt ratio has risen gradually from about 6 percent in 1981 to just under 30 percent today. The federal debt ratio experienced a large run-up of 44 percentage points from 1981 to 1995, then saw a 30-point reduction before the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008. Over the next 15 years, policy responses to the financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic pushed up the federal debt ratio by another 18 percentage points. The combined federal and provincial debt ratio, which today stands at almost 74 percent, is beginning to approach the 1996 peak of 99 percent, a year after Canada hit the "debt wall" (Watson and Clemens 2020).

Should Canadians worry about rising public debt today? If so, what problems does this indebtedness cause? Or does the current geopolitical situation justify large-scale government borrowing? Do today's relatively low interest rates on government bonds and prospects for higher economic growth indicate that governments have plenty of fiscal room to continue adding to this debt?

This Commentary provides a framework for thinking about prudent levels of government debt, built upon five central premises about public and private behaviour. At the core of my argument is the view that government has an essential role in using its spending and borrowing power to address economic crises as they occur, but maintaining this power – keeping our fiscal powder dry – requires reducing public indebtedness following each crisis so that governments have ample fiscal room to face the next one. The problem is that this post-crisis behaviour is politically challenging in democracies because it requires governments to do unpopular things when there is no obvious crisis; as a result, governments are often complacent. This fiscal complacency can easily lead debt ratios to rise to imprudent levels, reducing governments' ability to deal with the next crisis.

In what follows, I begin by explaining the five premises that form the foundation of my argument. I then bring them together to conclude that the government debt ratio can exist in three different zones: "forced austerity" occurs when the net debt ratio is so high that bondholders demand a large premium to purchase government bonds; "fiscal complacency" occurs when the debt ratio is in a middle zone where borrowing remains easy but well-advised spending cuts or tax increases are politically difficult; and "fiscal prudence" exists when the debt ratio is low enough that even a large shock can be addressed by heavy public borrowing at moderate interest rates. As of 2026, the combined net debt ratio for federal and provincial governments is in the middle zone of fiscal complacency, with governments unwilling to take action to prevent their debt ratios from rising further.

I also address two claims often heard in discussions of public debt today: that Canada is currently facing a crisis that justifies significant increases in public debt; and that high government debt is acceptable because future interest rates are likely to remain below the growth rate of GDP. I explain why I do not find either claim credible, and conclude that governments in Canada should thoroughly review their spending programs to identify and reduce low-priority spending, thereby making room for recently introduced higher-priority spending that appears likely to persist for several more years.

Five Premises for Fiscal Prudence

Premise #1: Governments should use their fiscal power to address crises

Many commentators concerned about public debt are also concerned about "large" government; their view often boils down to keeping government small and taxes low, and that government should not try to do too many things.

While sharing the view that governments are often guilty of overreach and frequently fail to recognize the limitations of their actions, I begin from the normative position that a central role for governments is to use their spending and borrowing powers to address crises of various kinds, an argument Barry Eichengreen and his co-authors (2021) have also made. Most crises that warrant significant government action are not good times to increase taxes, but they are obvious and desirable times for governments to increase spending and finance it through borrowing.

The details of spending vary hugely with the nature of each crisis, but large increases in government spending and borrowing are common during crises. Consider five examples from Canada's past hundred years:

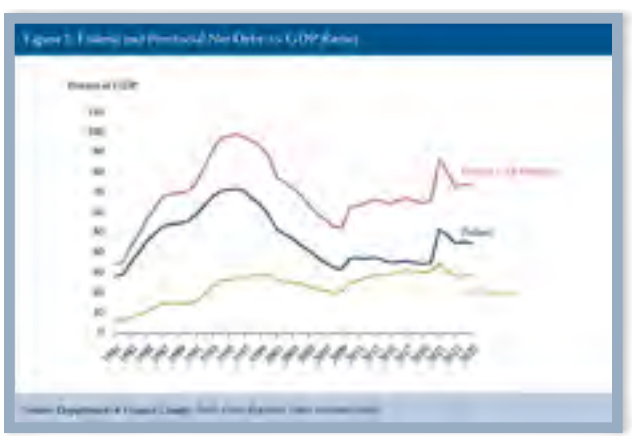
- The Canadian government spent (and borrowed) massively to mobilize and equip a large military force to fight in the First World War from 1914 through 1918. The federal net debt-to-GDP ratio increased by 42 percentage points.
- During the Great Depression from 1929 through the mid-1930s, the Canadian government borrowed to finance public spending as tax revenues slumped. The federal debt-to-GDP ratio increased by 35 percentage points.
- Beginning in 1940, the Canadian government massively increased its spending to equip its military and expand military production, much of which was shipped to its key allies – Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. The federal debt-to-GDP ratio increased by 70 percentage points between 1941 and 1946.
- The global financial crisis began in the fall of 2008 and created the largest economic downturn since the Great Depression. Canadian federal and provincial governments embarked on classic Keynesian fiscal stimulus packages over the next few years. The combined federal plus provincial debt-to-GDP ratio increased by 13 percentage points from 2008 to 2013.
- The COVID-19 pandemic began in early 2020 and led Canadian governments to increase their spending and borrowing to provide financial relief to families and businesses whose incomes had evaporated with the shuttering of the economy. Within a single year, the combined federal plus provincial debt-to-GDP ratio increased by 20 percentage points.

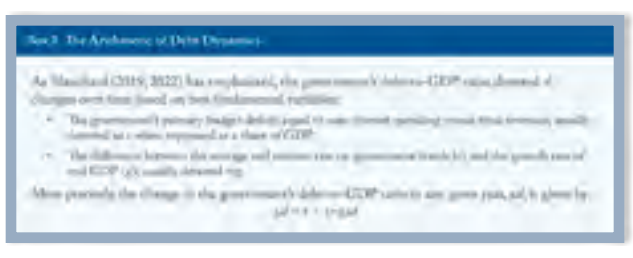
From wars and depression to financial crisis and pandemic, these five economic crises differed from one another but were all enormous shocks to the Canadian economy. Though it would be easy to debate the details of the governments' spending policies during each crisis, it would be impossible to argue that the governments of the day should have sat on their hands and done nothing. The crises demanded action, and governments responded by borrowing hugely to finance large-scale spending designed to address each one. When the next crisis occurs in Canada – as it surely will – we will all be better off if federal and provincial governments can use their fiscal power to good effect.

Premise #2: Governments must maintain their ability to borrow at reasonable interest rates

This second premise follows directly from the first: if governments are committed to using their fiscal power to address crises when they occur and doing so requires large-scale borrowing from private capital markets, then governments must maintain their ability to borrow at reasonable interest rates. But that requires actual and potential buyers of newly issued government bonds to see them as safe investments.

For investors to view government bonds as safe assets, they must believe that the issuing government can service the debt for many years and repay it when it eventually matures. They must also believe that the indebted government will not erode the real value of its debt by producing higher-than-expected inflation – a serious threat since almost all government bonds are issued in nominal terms and their yields are not automatically indexed to inflation. Central to investors' perceptions, therefore, are the intrinsic dynamics of government debt (see Box 1) and the central bank's commitment to low and stable inflation.





Primary budget deficits tend to increase the debt-to-GDP ratio because they create new debt, quite apart from the need to pay interest on existing debt. And when the average real interest rate on government debt exceeds the economy's growth rate, the debt rises faster than GDP, pushing up the debt-to-GDP ratio. The higher d is already, the stronger this second effect is.

For investors, the implication is that when d is already quite high, r exceeds g, and the government is running a primary budget deficit ($x > 0$), the debt-to-GDP ratio will rise. If this dynamic continues for several years, with d rising steadily over time, bond investors may eventually come to believe that the government has no credible plan to reduce d or repay its existing debt. Once this perception takes hold, the government bonds become less attractive. Demand falls, prices fall, and yields rise, reflecting the greater default risk associated with the bonds.

A separate risk involves the central bank's commitment to maintaining low and stable inflation. In most advanced countries today, central banks are operationally independent of their governments and have established credible commitments to low and stable inflation. But if this commitment wanes in the presence of high and rising government debt, perhaps combined with political pressure from the government, bond investors may come to expect higher future inflation. Since government bonds do not generally offer inflation protection, the fears of higher future inflation would lead bond prices to fall and their yields to rise, reflecting the greater risk of future inflation.

High and rising government indebtedness therefore carries a significant risk of rising bond yields and government borrowing costs. Maintaining access to capital markets at moderate interest rates requires governments to preserve confidence in their ability and willingness to repay their debts without relying on future inflation to erode their real value. The problem is that bond investors' perceptions are highly context-specific, and it is almost impossible to know the level of debt at which investors start to demand higher yields because of the greater risks, or how much extra yield they will require when this occurs.

Once investors decide they will purchase government bonds only if their yields include a significant risk premium, the government is placed in a difficult position. Borrowing has now become more expensive than normal, and perhaps hugely so. The only way to avoid the high costs of borrowing is to borrow less, but this requires either raising more revenues through taxation or reducing the current level of spending. Both actions are politically unpopular and tend to reduce economic growth in the short run. If the economy is already slumping, these fiscal adjustments could push the economy into a full recession. But unless the government can continue its fiscal plans by borrowing from some other investors (and this is where lenders such as the IMF come forward in extreme situations), it will find itself in a state of "forced austerity."

In Canada in 1995, bondholders viewed the country's high public debt as excessive and saw no credible plan to reduce it, and government bond yields increased by over a percentage point for about a year. The Canadian government then embarked on a significant fiscal contraction – mostly by cutting spending – which eventually decreased the federal debt-to-GDP ratio by over 35 percentage points within 14 years (Watson and Clemens 2020). In Greece, however, where the debt ratio was much higher than Canada's, government bond yields increased by over 25 percentage points between 2010 and 2012. The government was soon forced to implement a partial debt default and significant cuts to public spending, contributing to the country's dismal economic performance for several years (PIIE 2020; Thomsen 2019).

Governments should always seek to avoid forced austerity. But avoiding these economically painful and politically unpopular fiscal decisions requires preventing debt ratios from getting so high that investors view government bonds as risky assets. This, in turn, requires governments to heed the third premise.

Premise #3: Following a debt-raising crisis, governments should reduce their debt ratios quickly to prepare for the next crisis

Having used its fiscal power to borrow and spend to address an economic crisis, the government will be left with a higher debt-to-GDP ratio. Depending on the size and nature of the crisis, the government's debt ratio may have increased considerably, as was the case following the two world wars and, to a lesser extent, the COVID-19 pandemic. The greater debt ratio may itself not be an immediate problem for the government because bondholders may still view the debt as low enough for the government to

▶ Continued on page 15

◀ Continued from page 14

service and repay, and may not expect the government to use future inflation to reduce the real value of its liabilities. In this situation, the government can still finance budget deficits at moderate interest rates.

The problem, however, is that if the government takes insufficient action to reduce its debt ratio following the crisis, another crisis may soon occur and force another increase in the debt ratio – but this time from a higher starting point. With a big enough "new" crisis, the government could easily find its efforts to borrow frustrated by bondholders' perceptions that its debt has become too high and that it has no credible fiscal plan in place to address it. If bond yields begin to rise sharply, the government will be unable to command as much fiscal power as it intended. Its fiscal powder will no longer be dry.

The dangers associated with not reducing the debt ratio following a crisis are easy to imagine but difficult to quantify. Recent work by Lester and Laurin (2023, 2025) provides some scale of the sensitivity of the fiscal situation to shocks to interest rates and economic growth – familiar shocks for contemporary policymakers. But shocks can also have unfamiliar sources and surprising magnitudes, as the pandemic certainly proved. How do we put a realistic number on the probability of a future crisis or estimate the amount of government borrowing required to address it? Can we quantify, or even imagine, all the kinds of crises that may occur?

In contrast, the costs of making the fiscal adjustments necessary to reduce the debt ratio are more tangible and easier to quantify. Governments have two basic policy approaches for generating the primary budget surpluses required to lower the debt ratio (i.e., reducing x in the equation in Box 1): reducing spending and increasing tax revenues.

With a progressive tax-and-transfer system, the beneficiaries of most spending programs are disproportionately at the low-to-middle end of the income spectrum, while those who pay the taxes to finance them are disproportionately at the middle-to-high end of the spectrum. As a result, program cuts are resisted by those who are not required to pay most of the associated costs, and tax increases are resisted by those who expect to receive little of the benefits that their higher taxes could finance.

Both approaches are politically unpopular and difficult to achieve, and each also tends to reduce aggregate demand and, in the short run at least, slow economic growth. If the economy is already in a slow-growth phase, these actions could actually tip the economy into a recession. In either case, the growth rate of real GDP, g in the above equation, falls or becomes negative, pushing the debt-to-GDP ratio higher. So, there are offsetting forces at play: spending cuts and tax increases directly reduce the primary deficit and thus the debt ratio; but by reducing the economy's growth rate in the short run, they also push the debt ratio in the opposite direction.

The political and economic difficulties associated with these fiscal adjustments help explain why governments often choose to avoid them – especially when the recent crisis appears to be over, and no new one is visible on the horizon. This is the essence of "fiscal complacency" and is especially understandable for governments elected for short terms, which often find it difficult to think about longer-term issues.

Adding to this complacency is a problem faced by any government attempting to operate a budget surplus for an extended period, which brings us to the final two premises.

Premise #4: Many taxpayers demand services at least equal to the value of current taxes

When government debt-service payments become large enough to drive a significant wedge between the taxes paid and the (non-interest) government services received, many taxpayers come to view the fiscal situation as out of balance, with taxes too high for the services they receive. This displeasure is often manifested in comparisons of the size of debt-service payments with other specific services. In 1995, for example, federal debt-service payments were 26 percent of total federal expenditures and were viewed as inappropriately crowding out other spending. Even in the past two years, with lower interest rates and a lower debt ratio than in 1995, people commonly complain that the federal government's annual debt-service payments – roughly $55 billion in 2025 – are now about 10 percent of government spending and exceed total annual federal health transfers to the provinces.

There is something odd about comparing debt-service payments with other spending categories. It is obviously true that if governments did not have to make interest payments to service their debts, they would have more funds available for other things. But debt-service payments do not come out of nowhere; the need to make them today reflects past borrowing for some, presumably useful, purpose. Such complaints seem to be based on the faulty idea that debt-service payments are somehow wasted money – as if the past spending financed with the debt being serviced today provided no benefit. Or perhaps they are based on the idea that the debt was initially incurred to finance programs now seen as a waste of money. Whatever the underlying reasoning, many voters and taxpayers clearly seem alarmed by high and rising debt-service obligations and see them as evidence that the fiscal situation needs to be adjusted.

One important implication of this public perspective is that governments find it difficult to run significant budget surpluses for extended periods. Surpluses are certainly possible, and do exist from time to time, but a string of large budget surpluses will fairly quickly be met with the view from taxpayers that the government is taxing too much because it does not need so much revenue to finance the lower level of current services it provides. During Canada's fiscal adjustments following the 1995 federal budget, it took only three years for large budget deficits to turn into small budget surpluses. The debt ratio had only fallen by a few percentage points, yet after just two years of budget surpluses there was little public support for paying down the debt further; the dominant fiscal conversation had then become how Canadians should "spend the fiscal dividend" (Courchene 2002).

If significant budget surpluses for extended periods are not possible politically, then how is a highly indebted government ever supposed to reduce its indebtedness?

Premise #5: To reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio, governments need to focus on producing primary surpluses and hope that economic growth outpaces interest rates

This final premise follows directly from the previous one. If sustained and significant budget surpluses are not politically possible, then sustained and significant reductions in the stock of nominal debt are also not possible: after all, budget surpluses constitute nothing more than a reduction in the government's existing stock of debt. Yet reductions in the debt-to-GDP ratio do not require reductions in the stock of nominal debt; they only require some combination of small primary deficits and a low (or negative) value of r-g.

Some reductions in nominal government debt are nonetheless possible and have occurred at various points in Canada's economic history. The most significant episodes were:

- Between 1922 and 1930, as the economy grew quickly and just before the onset of the Great Depression, the federal government's nominal debt fell by about 10 percent.
- In the dozen years immediately following the Second World War, when the economy was growing quickly, the federal government's nominal debt fell by about 15 percent.
- Following the 1995 federal budget through the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008, the federal nominal debt fell by about 16 percent.

These episodes may suggest that premises #4 and #5 miss the mark and that large budget surpluses are indeed possible. But these highlighted percentage declines are actually quite small, and much smaller than the change in debt-to-GDP ratios over the same periods. To illustrate the difference, Figure 2 shows the federal government's net debt ratio from 1940 onward. In the dozen years after the end of the war, the debt ratio fell by a remarkable 80 percentage points, from 110 percent in 1946 to 30 percent in 1958. This enormous decline in the debt ratio occurred even though the outstanding stock of nominal debt fell by only 15 percent over the same period.

The difference is explained by the arithmetic of debt dynamics, as highlighted in the equation in Box 1. If the government is running large primary surpluses ($x < 0$) and the interest rate on government debt is less than the growth rate of GDP ($r < g$), the debt-to-GDP ratio will fall. And this is exactly the situation during the early post-war period shown in Figure 2: the economy was growing quickly, and the federal government ran primary surpluses in most years, even though overall surpluses (and thus outright debt reduction) were quite limited.5

The central policy implication of premises #4 and #5 is as follows: if governments seek to reduce their debt-to-GDP ratios following a debt-raising crisis, large and sustained budget surpluses will be politically challenging. Instead, they need to run significant primary surpluses and hope for healthy economic growth and modest interest rates. While governments have discretion over their spending and taxation policies and thus considerable influence on their primary budget balances, they have much less influence on either the real interest rate (r) or the growth rate of real GDP (g). The less governments can rely on favourable values of r and g, the more they must rely on the spending cuts and tax increases necessary to generate sufficient primary surpluses. As argued earlier, these policy decisions are usually politically challenging, and governments often succumb to the forces of fiscal complacency – with the result being gradual increases in the debt ratio.

Putting it all Together: Three Zones of Public Debt

The five premises discussed so far provide the foundation for my overall argument and for Figure 3, which shows the combined federal and provincial net debt ratio across three coloured zones. The red zone shows that at debt ratios greater than approximately 95 percent, Canada's governments (collectively) are likely to face forced austerity, requiring them to raise taxes or cut spending to avoid deficits which would need to be financed at excessive interest rates. The yellow zone shows the range of debt ratios in which fiscal complacency is the central issue; reductions in the debt ratio are warranted to prepare for future shocks, but these fiscal adjustments are politically difficult to achieve. The green zone shows that at debt ratios below about 67 percent, governments are well prepared to face even a large future crisis and are thus displaying fiscal prudence; their fiscal powder is dry.

The two boundaries shown, one at a 95 percent debt ratio and the other at a 67 percent debt ratio, should be viewed as rough approximations, but their positions are based on solid reasoning. In particular, the boundary between the red and yellow zones – where bondholders' perceptions of risk begin to lead to significant increases in borrowing rates – reflects the following observations:

- Canada hit the "debt wall" in 1995, when the combined debt ratio was 99 percent, which led to increases in government bond yields and several years of forced austerity (Courchene 2002; and Watson and Clemens 2020). Since it is impossible to know exactly when bondholders will perceive greater risks of future default or inflation, and because there is value in erring on the side of greater fiscal prudence, I arbitrarily placed the lower bound of the red zone at 95 percent, a few percentage points below the 1996 peak.
- The red-yellow boundary should not be viewed as constant over time; it depends importantly on the economic context. In particular, the higher the real interest rate (r) is relative to the growth rate of real GDP (g), the more the debt-to-GDP ratio tends to rise under its own dynamics, and the more likely bondholders are to perceive greater risk. In other words, the higher the value of r-g, the lower the red-yellow boundary will be.
- It is worth noting that the value of r-g was higher in the late 1990s than it is today. Between 1995 and 1999, the real interest rate on government bonds averaged roughly 2.5 percentage points higher than it is today, while the growth rate of real GDP was about 1.5 percentage points higher. So, when Canada last hit the "debt wall," the value of r-g was about one percentage point higher than it is today. This means the intrinsic dynamics of the debt ratio are less threatening today than they were three decades ago, suggesting that the red-yellow boundary is likely higher today – though precisely how much higher is difficult to know.
- A final consideration is whether there is a causal connection between the debt-to-GDP ratio and future GDP growth, as highlighted in prominent research by Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth Rogoff (2010). If high public indebtedness today tends to reduce the future growth rate of real GDP, as their empirical results suggest, then bondholders may begin to perceive greater risk at lower debt ratios, thus lowering the red-yellow boundary. Interestingly, Reinhart and Rogoff find across a large cross-section of countries that the key threshold for the debt ratio, above which future growth tends to be slower, is 90 percent.

The green zone in Figure 3 shows the range of debt ratios within which Canada's governments are collectively being fiscally prudent. For the purposes of this report, fiscal prudence means that the debt-to-GDP ratio is low enough that no realistic shock could increase public borrowing needs enough to leave governments immediately facing sharp increases in borrowing costs. In other words, the highest debt ratio that can still be considered fiscally prudent is one that is "one large shock" away from entering the red zone. But how large is "one large shock"?

Recall the five shocks mentioned earlier, all of which led to substantial increases in government debt: the First World War, the Great Depression, the Second World War, the global financial crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The average increase in the federal debt ratio during the first three shocks was 49 percentage points, but these were highly unusual and dramatic events.



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The average increase in the combined (federal plus provincial) debt ratio during the two most recent crises was 17 percentage points, and these two shocks will hopefully provide a better guide for contemporary governments than the three earlier events, which involved two global wars and a massive economic depression. But many observers now emphasize the growing possibility of a "polycrisis" – multiple crises occurring simultaneously whose individual effects interact to magnify their combined impact – so shocks larger than the most recent ones should not be ruled out (Lawrence et al. 2022).

Here I assume that the largest realistic shock governments should consider would increase the combined debt ratio by about 28 percentage points, 8 percentage points (40 percent) more than the pandemic-related increase. This assumption allows for either a very large single-cause shock or a multi-cause shock whose components interact to produce an impact of this magnitude. The implication of this prudent but admittedly arbitrary assumption is that the yellow-green boundary in Figure 3 occurs at a debt ratio of about 67 percent. Of course, if policymakers wish to adopt a more prudent fiscal stance by placing more weight on the likelihood of even larger shocks, then the yellow zone would extend further downward, meaning that an even lower debt ratio would be required before governments could claim to be fully prepared to face the uncertain future.

The middle, yellow zone shows the range of debt ratios that give rise to fiscal complacency – a range that contains Canadian governments' current combined debt ratio of roughly 74 percent. For debt ratios between 67 percent and 95 percent, governments are well advised to cut spending or raise taxes to produce the primary budget surpluses required to reduce the debt ratio further and better prepare for the next crisis. The fact that there is no current crisis, however, combined with the short-run economic costs and political challenges of such fiscal adjustments, often leads governments to take little or no action toward reducing their debt ratio.

But the real problem with such fiscal complacency is that it is an expensive gamble. If things turn out well and no shock occurs, the government can breathe a sigh of relief and continue running budget deficits financed at moderate interest rates. If a large shock occurs in the near future, however, governments' borrowing needs may push the debt ratio into the red zone, causing bond yields to rise sharply, and the government will enter a situation of forced austerity. A short-sighted government will often be inclined to take this gamble; a far-sighted government will instead make the difficult short-run fiscal adjustments required to reduce the debt ratio toward the green zone, putting itself in a much better position when the next shock occurs. This far-sighted government behaviour is the essence of fiscal prudence – and of what it means to keep our fiscal powder dry.

Is Canada in a Crisis Now?

My analysis suggests that Canadian governments are collectively being fiscally complacent by not considering seriously enough the benefits associated with reducing their debt ratios to more fully prepare for the next large economic crisis. But one obvious response to this claim – perhaps in the minds of Canada's political leaders today – is that we are currently experiencing a significant crisis, so running large budget deficits and increasing the debt-to-GDP ratio is entirely appropriate.

Canada's major economic challenges today – connected with our fraying relationship with the United States, the associated threats to our sovereignty, and rising geopolitical tensions – are fundamentally different from the five shocks discussed earlier. Each of those shocks – the two world wars, the Great Depression, the global financial crisis, and the pandemic – was a temporary event. While it was obviously not clear at the start how long each would last, it is reasonable to assume that few people viewed them as permanent. Instead, they were viewed as short-lived events that were nonetheless serious enough to warrant massive spending and borrowing on the part of Canadian governments to protect the safety and economic security of Canadians. The large increases in public indebtedness that resulted were then reduced, through some combination of debt repayment and economic growth, in the years following the shocks.

In contrast, as the federal government has often argued, including in the prime minister's widely discussed 2026 Davos speech (Carney 2026), Canada is entering a new world order. The United States, which was the driving force behind the development of the rules-based international order in the years following the Second World War, is now pulling back from that leadership role. It is becoming much more protectionist in its trading relationships and more aggressive in seeking to prevent other leading countries from playing a significant role in the Western Hemisphere. It is pushing its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies to spend much more on defence so that the United States does not bear such a disproportionate burden within the alliance. And just as the United States is withdrawing from its post-war leadership position, China and Russia are openly flexing their



muscles and threatening the sovereignty of other countries. Unlike even a few years ago, Canadians now perceive a genuine risk to the country's sovereignty and national security, perhaps especially in the Arctic.

The key fiscal point is this: while this new world order may not last forever, and the United States may once again re-engage as a driving force in a liberal rules-based economic order, there is considerable pessimism that this outcome is likely in the near future. Even the expected change in US administrations in 2029 is seen as insufficient to return the United States to its previous position of constructive global leadership (Gordon 2026). In contrast, the new world order to which we are now adjusting is usually seen as the "new normal" – one that will last for a few decades, at least, and maybe much longer. And the associated increases in government spending – from improving Canada's trade infrastructure and expanding the military to increasing the country's presence in the Arctic and improving internal trade capacities – should not be seen as expenditures that will last only a few years. Instead, they should be viewed as greater expenditures that will last for as long as this new world order itself endures, maybe permanently.

If most of this new public spending will end up being permanent, or even lasting for "only" a few decades, there is little justification for financing it through government borrowing. If the world is now a more dangerous and complicated place, Canadians may simply have to accept that military expansion is needed to better protect the country and make investments to enhance economic self-sufficiency in key sectors. If such new spending is essential to Canada's national and economic security, it would be more appropriate to finance it either by taxing more heavily or by deciding that other lower-priority spending should be reduced to make room for the greater defence spending. Financing this spending through budget deficits would instead shift the burden to future generations, with little justification for asking younger generations to foot the bill for greater benefits today. The same argument applies to increased spending to ensure sovereignty in the Arctic or to improve the ability to develop natural resource projects. Temporary increases in government spending are reasonable candidates for deficit financing; permanent increases require more enduring adjustments in taxes or other spending.

Of course, the distinction between temporary and permanent changes in the global geopolitical landscape is probably not as sharp as suggested in the previous paragraphs. For example, if the geopolitical landscape is actually shifting permanently but it takes several years for Canadian governments to adjust to these changes through large increases in spending, then the transition period to that new world order can be viewed as a temporary shock, and borrowing to finance many of these transitional expenditures may be appropriate. In practice, however, it is almost impossible to distinguish precisely between temporary and permanent changes in spending requirements, at least until many years have passed. Yet fiscal authorities should still be mindful of this difference and of the strong case for financing permanent changes in high-priority spending either through tax increases or reductions in lower-priority spending, thereby avoiding large increases in the debt-to-GDP ratio.

Can Canada Rely on Low Interest Rates and Rapid Economic Growth to Reduce Its Debt?

Over the past decade, Lawrence Summers (2015) and others have postulated that advanced economies are experiencing a "secular stagnation" caused by increases in the supply of saving and a changing structure of investment demand, resulting in lower real interest rates and slower-than-expected economic growth. This argument has been used to explain why the long-run equilibrium real interest rate – the rate that exists after all cyclical influences, including those from monetary policy, have dissipated – appears to have been falling over the past few decades.

Within this overall economic context, Olivier Blanchard (2019, 2022) has argued that low real interest rates imply that the welfare cost of government debt is very low and may be zero, or even negative. In particular, as we saw in Box 1 in the equation describing debt dynamics, if the real interest rate on government debt is less than the growth rate of real GDP ($r < g$), and the government also runs a small enough primary budget deficit (a small x), the debt-to-GDP ratio will decline even if there is an overall budget deficit and thus a rise in total debt. In this setting, the burden on future generations from current expansions in government debt is negative because the tax rates required to service and repay that debt in the future will be lower than the tax rates faced by the current generation. Put more bluntly, this line of reasoning suggests that if $r < g$ and primary budget deficits are small enough, there is little need to worry about government debt.

This argument immediately leads to the following question for Canadian governments: can we safely rely on the real interest rate (r) being less than the growth rate of real GDP (g) for the foreseeable future and continue to run substantial budget deficits without pushing up the debt-to-GDP ratio?

It is impossible to know where real interest rates or real GDP growth rates are headed, and projections based on short-run cyclical factors are likely to be less relevant than those based on longer-run secular trends. Kenneth Rogoff (2025, chapter 25) has expressed considerable skepticism about the belief that interest rates will remain low and emphasizes that, when examining data over several centuries, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the recent decline emphasized by Summers (2015) and Blanchard (2019, 2022) is likely to be a short-lived phenomenon. Rogoff provides many reasons to expect real interest rates to rise over the next decade or so, including increases in investments to address climate change, a renaissance in military spending in the face of rising geopolitical tensions, populism-driven policies that redistribute income toward income groups with higher propensities to spend, and new investments in infrastructure to accommodate the growing energy demands of artificial intelligence (AI).

At the top of Rogoff's list of reasons to expect real interest rates to rise, however, are increases in global public (and private) debt. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also warned of rising government debt in many countries and notes that global government (gross) debt, equal to 80 percent of global GDP in 2015, is projected to exceed 100 percent of GDP by 2030, only slightly below its level at the end of the Second World War (IMF 2024). For the 20 most advanced economies, the current debt-to-GDP ratio already exceeds its 1946 level. The IMF emphasizes the role of higher government debt in driving up interest rates and dampening future GDP growth rates.

At the same time, many Canadians note our low government debt-to-GDP ratio in comparison to those in other advanced countries – and they are right to recognize Canada's better fiscal position (Fuss et al. 2024). Our lower debt-to-GDP ratio provides us with more "fiscal room" to respond to shocks when they occur. This greater fiscal room was a large part of the reason why Canada had more aggressive policy responses to both the global financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic than other G7 countries: before the onset of these shocks, the combined federal plus provincial debt ratio in Canada was only 53 percent (2008) and 65 percent (2019). As of the fall of 2026, that same debt ratio is 74 percent and rising.

Those who emphasize the strength of Canada's current fiscal position may go one step further and argue that the high level of public debt in other countries is not relevant to the country's domestic situation and, if anything, suggests that Canadian governments have greater access to funds for financing budget deficits. However, global financial markets are highly integrated, and since investors view Canadian government bonds as close substitutes for those issued by governments in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and other advanced countries, the yields on these bonds tend to rise and fall together. In other words, to understand where real government bond yields are likely to go, it is important to examine global public debt, not just Canadian public debt (TD Economics 2026b).

The connection between public debt and interest rates has a long history in economics. The traditional view is that government budget deficits increase the overall demand for credit and tend to push interest rates higher. Through this mechanism, budget deficits can "crowd out" private investment, since higher interest rates reduce the amount of planned private investment. Any resulting decline in private investment has the potential to reduce the future growth rate of real GDP (Boskin 2020).

What is the estimated impact of higher government debt on interest rates? In the United States, Salmon (2025) reviews a large body of empirical work on this question and finds that a one-percentage-point increase in the debt-to-GDP ratio raises long-term government bond yields by between an estimated 4.6 and 6.1 basis points. In other words, a 10-percentage-point increase in the US federal debt-to-GDP ratio, say from 100 percent to 110 percent, is expected to increase long-term

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government bond yields by about 50 basis points, or one-half of a percentage point. Baldacci and Kumar (2010), using panel data from 31 countries between 1980 and 2008, found that a 10-percentage-point increase in the debt-to-GDP ratio increased long-term government bond yields by between 200 and 500 basis points, depending on the initial fiscal conditions; the higher the initial budget deficits and initial debt ratio, the larger is the impact of greater debt on government bond yields. The much smaller estimated effect for the United States likely reflects the fact that US government bonds continue to be viewed, at least for now, as among the safest government assets, not least because of the US dollar's continued role as the world's dominant reserve currency (Rogoff 2025). But whether the focus is on the United States or other countries, the evidence is clear that increases in government debt tend to push up interest rates.

The upshot of all this is that Canadian governments should probably not comfortably assume that interest rates on government bonds will remain low for the foreseeable future. The interest rate on Canadian 10-year government bonds has increased by about 250 basis points since the end of 2021, with inflation expectations likely better anchored now than they were five years ago. Similar interest rates in the United States, which show little sign of reining in the growth of its public debt, have increased by over 400 basis points since 2021. During the first eight months of 2026, there has been a significant increase in 10-year bond yields across many advanced countries, a natural part of the widespread sell-off of government bonds (TD Economics 2026c). If global government debt continues to rise as projected by the IMF, there is good reason to expect interest rates to continue rising.

Future growth rates of real GDP are harder to predict. Various economic forces, including population ageing, slowing population growth, adjustment to a warming climate, and the emergence of AI-driven technological change, will combine to produce a highly uncertain impact on GDP growth rates in Canada and elsewhere.

Amid this considerable uncertainty, two other factors suggest that Canadian governments should probably not rely on significantly faster GDP growth to reduce their debt-to-GDP ratios. The first is the greater uncertainty that confronts businesses in all countries, but perhaps especially in Canada. This uncertainty has been caused by a combination of greater trade protectionism, initially from the United States but then through retaliation by other countries, and greater geopolitical instability that appears to be a key characteristic of today's world. Since business investment involves forward-looking decisions in which assets are built or purchased with time horizons measured in decades, heightened uncertainty tends to be an enormous drag on the amount of investment actually carried out. The weakness of business investment in Canada – which has been true for over a decade – threatens future real GDP growth (Robson and Bafale 2024).

On the other hand, the federal government has responded to Canada's weak investment climate with a series of pro-investment policies – including identifying major projects deemed to be in the national interest, referring these projects to the newly created Major Projects Office with a mandate to expedite the project review process, introducing corporate tax policies to substantially accelerate business investment write-offs, and seeking to attract foreign financial capital to Canada.

These policies, combined with a greater commitment by the federal government to increase its own spending on infrastructure projects, will hopefully lead to a substantial increase in Canadian investment over the next few years. If domestic investment increases markedly, a short-run multiplier effect can be expected to increase the growth rate of GDP, at least for a few years. In the longer run, any positive impact on the growth rate will depend crucially on the extent to which these investments increase the economy's productive capacity, which in turn will depend on the nature of the investments themselves. Expanding the capacity of our port facilities may well increase the economy's productive capacity, whereas improvements in Canada's military capability, while beneficial on security grounds, may have little or no impact on our economic capacity. So, while it would be inappropriate to assume that these pro-investment policies will have no effect on the growth rate (g) over the next few years, it may also be overly optimistic to expect any short-run impact to persist in the longer term. At this point, it is simply too early to know.

The second reason not to be too optimistic about future growth rates is the level of government debt itself. If the IMF projections of rising global government debt (cited above) end up being correct, there will be good reasons to expect increases in real interest rates, and this effect alone will likely lead to a reduction in private investment. In addition, if the results highlighted by Reinhart and Rogoff (2010) and Sever (2025) are correct – that high government debt tends to negatively affect future growth rates – then governments in all countries should be alert to this possible drag on future growth.

So, can Canadian governments realistically rely on low interest rates and rapid GDP growth ($r < g$) to help reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio, without taking the more difficult actions required to produce moderate primary surpluses? Such reliance would be a significant gamble. If r remains low and g increases modestly, governments may win the bet and avoid the tough fiscal decisions. But if r continues to rise and g remains low or even falls further, the debt-to-GDP ratio will have a built-in upward dynamic which can only be reversed by running primary budget surpluses. If governments remain fiscally complacent and avoid the adjustments needed to generate such surpluses, the debt ratio will continue to creep upward – thereby reducing the ability to respond to the next economic crisis.

Conclusion: Keeping Our Fiscal Powder Dry

The combined federal plus provincial debt-to-GDP ratio today is roughly 74 percent, well below its 1996 peak but also far above its level just before the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008. Federal and provincial governments are currently in a state of "fiscal complacency," comforted by the fact that their current budget deficits are being easily financed by borrowing at moderate interest rates. As a result, they feel no compelling need to either raise taxes or trim spending to run the primary budget surpluses needed to reduce their debt ratios; they likely judge that such fiscal adjustments would offer little or no short-term political payoff. We are therefore likely to see the debt-to-GDP ratio continue its gradual upward drift.

If Canadian governments wished to display longer-run fiscal prudence, however, they would place more weight on the possibility of a future crisis that would necessitate large-scale borrowing. They would also recognize that a large enough shock might raise the debt ratio so much that bondholders begin to perceive greater risks of either default or inflation. Once such perceptions take hold, Canadian governments would find themselves in a situation of "forced austerity" in which they would be under pressure to raise taxes or cut spending (or both) to avoid borrowing at punishingly high interest rates. To avoid such an undesirable outcome, governments should make difficult short-run decisions to gradually but significantly reduce their debt-to-GDP ratios.

To make matters more challenging, large increases in public spending are coming in the near future. Elderly support programs and healthcare spending will continue to grow faster than GDP as the population ages, putting pressure on both provincial and federal budgets. Investments designed to smooth and speed a transition toward a cleaner energy system will be costly, and some of this spending will come from public funds. Significant public investments in our trade infrastructure will be made to help diversify Canadian trade away from the United States by improving access to other foreign markets. And probably the biggest new spending pressures will come from increases in defence and national security budgets, which appear to be permanently increasing to honour Canada's new NATO commitments made in response to significant changes in the geopolitical landscape. Based on the federal 2025 budget, however, only a small portion of these future spending increases has been incorporated into the fiscal framework. When the bulk of the new spending is eventually built into the budget projections, how will it be financed?

Such increases in spending can be financed in only three general ways. Almost certainly the easiest approach politically is to finance this new spending by borrowing, as it requires no unpopular tax increases or cuts to spending programs. Yet avoiding these unpopular actions and instead further increasing the public debt not only shifts the economic burden to future generations but also raises the likelihood of the undesirable scenario described above. But when Canadian governments find themselves in the zone of fiscal complacency, as they do today, it should not be surprising if this is the approach ultimately taken. This outcome may reflect as badly on voters' unwillingness to accept tough realities as on political leaders' unwillingness to promote policies for the long term.

The second general approach is to increase government revenues, either through higher taxes or through the sale of government assets, an option the prime minister recently mentioned at the investment summit held in Toronto. Higher taxes are always politically unpopular, and depending on which taxes are increased, they may also create disincentives for work and investment, with negative impacts on future economic growth. So, in an environment in which governments are rightly concerned about low rates of domestic investment and GDP growth, avoiding tax increases has an obvious appeal. Selling large government assets (such as airports) can certainly generate funds to finance some new spending, although this revenue can be received only once and, depending on the assets sold, the sale may attract considerable political opposition.

The third approach is to cut other lower-priority spending, thereby making room for new, higher-priority spending commitments. The difficulty of this exercise should not be underestimated, not least because support for existing programs can quickly become entrenched among program recipients. An apolitical, evidence-based review process run by professionals who can assess both the effectiveness of existing programs and whether they continue to be required in the current economic and social context is likely to be much more successful over the longer term than more politically charged short-term approaches (Bourgon 2009). Though the federal government has now embarked on a plan to cut its operating expenditures by 15 percent within three years, it has also exempted from the exercise major transfers to provinces and individuals, thus massively reducing the potential scope of these planned cuts (Lester 2025). In short, the federal government's current spending-reduction exercise will only free up a small fraction of the resources required to finance its planned spending increases.

The bottom line is that Canadian governments are in a difficult fiscal situation, though they may not yet fully appreciate it. There is no immediate crisis, which is obviously good, but the absence of a crisis contributes to the state of fiscal complacency. Governments are not yet making the prudent but difficult choices required to reduce their debt ratios to a safer level where they would be more fully prepared for future crises. Which existing spending programs can be significantly trimmed? Which programs are low priority enough to eliminate altogether? Which taxes can be increased while maintaining a sense of fairness without being a drag on economic growth? New spending plans only increase the need for these difficult decisions. Now is the time for governments across the country to think carefully about their fiscal options. At a minimum, Canadians and their governments need to be discussing these issues in an honest and transparent manner.



Laval Police Service 2027 canine unit calendars now on sale

Get your dog calendar and support the Martin-Matte Foundation cause

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The Laval Police Service, in partnership with several organizations, has launched the 2027 edition of its ever-popular canine unit calendar to benefit the Martin-Matte Foundation.

This year marks the 18th edition of the annual calendar, an initiative that has raised nearly $700,000 for the foundation since its inception in 2009.

Dedicated to the cause

Thanks in large part to the generosity of the community, recreational and respite activities for people living with traumatic brain injuries can receive adequate funding.

"For 18 years now, the members of our Canine Unit have been dedicated to this initiative with heart and conviction," Laval Police Director Karine Ménard said during a recent official launch event.

"Behind every calendar sold lies a genuine desire to make a difference in the lives of people living with a traumatic brain injury and their loved ones," she continued.

"Thanks to our partnership with the Martin-Matte Foundation, families in Laval and across Quebec can access resources, respite activities, and essential support," said Ménard.

Making a real difference

"I encourage everyone to continue supporting this cause by purchasing the 2027 calendar. Together, we can make a real difference in improving the quality of life for many people."

The partnership between the Laval Police and the Martin-Matte Foundation was established following the tragic events that claimed the life of police dog handler Eric Lavoie, who died from a traumatic brain injury. He was injured in a car accident while responding to an emergency call in 2005. After passing away three years later in 2009, his colleagues created the first K-9 unit calendar to support the cause in his memory.

At the recent launch, members of the Laval Police K-9 Unit also presented funds raised from the sale of the 2026 calendars, totaling $29,822. This brings the total contribution from the LPS to the foundation to $673,516 over the past 17 years.

To obtain the 2027 dog calendar

Calendars are available now at the East End Gendarmerie Station, located at 2785 Francis-Hughes Avenue, at the Investigations Centre located at 2911 Chomedey Boulevard, and at the West End Gendarmerie Station and Headquarters of the Laval Police Service, now located at 2455 Curé-Labelle Boulevard.

There will also be three sales points during the month of November at the following locations:

- November 11 at Cité de la Santé Hospital, 1755 René-Laennec Street in Laval between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.;
- November 18 at 1333 Chomedey Boulevard in Laval between 6:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.;
- November 19 at Carrefour Laval between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

It is also possible to purchase the K-9 unit dog calendars online on the Martin-Matte Foundation website at: https://www.fondationmartinmatte.com/calendriers-des-maitres-chiens.

It's worth noting that every year you can also purchase the LPS K-9 calendar at the offices of the Laval News at 3860 Notre-Dame Blvd., Suite 304, in Chomedey.







By Martin C. Barry

Five homeless after house fire on Chomedey's Dunn Ave.

Five residents of a triplex on Dunn Avenue in Chomedey became temporarily homeless on the night of October 28 after a fire severely damaged their apartments and the building's structure.

While investigators from the Laval Fire Department were still completing an investigation earlier this week, the initial conclusion about the cause was that it was an electrical malfunction.

Around 3:30 a.m, 911 received a call about a fire at the home just north of Samson Boulevard.

The first firefighters to arrive saw that flames were raging and had already engulfed one of the apartments in the triplex.



Fire razes single-family home on Saint-Judes in Chomedey



A single-family dwelling on Saint-Judes Street in Chomedey was destroyed by fire during the early morning hours of October 23 during a blaze that culminated in the building being declared a total loss.

The City of Laval's 911 service received the call shortly after 5 am that the two-storey house on Saint-Judes near the corner of Lévesque Blvd. and Promenade des Îles was on fire.

By the time firefighters arrived around ten minutes later, flames had spread throughout the structure, generating a large amount of smoke.

Four people living in the house were rendered homeless and total damage was estimated by the Laval Fire Dept. at around $740,000, including the value of the building and its contents.

The LFD transferred responsibility for an investigation of the cause to the Laval Police.

Laval woman arrested in Ontario as prison meth smuggling suspect

Ontario Provincial Police in Gravenhurst Ontario have arrested a woman from Laval after finding her near a federal prison in an idling car with an aerial drone and a quantity of methamphetamine.

The woman, identified by the OPP as Sabrina Landry, is suspected of trying to smuggle the drug into the Beaver Creek Institution.

On Sunday October 18 just after 1 a.m., the OPP Emergency Response Team was patrolling the Gravenhurst area when they decided to investigate a suspicious vehicle parked on a road around two kilometres distance from the prison.

In a statement, the OPP maintained that its officers found items in the vehicle, including a drone, "consistent with the trafficking of contraband" into the nearby correctional institution.

Landry, age 27, is charged with:

- Possession of a Schedule I substance (Methamphetamine) for trafficking;
- Two counts of possession for the purpose of distributing;
- Two counts of possession of contraband near a visitor control point at a penitentiary;
- And possession of a Schedule I substance for trafficking.

Prison officials seize contraband at Federal Training Centre

Correctional Services Canada reports that on October 11, Federal Training Centre staff seized contraband and unauthorized items at the FTC, which is a multi-level detention institution located in Laval's Saint-Vincent-de-Paul district.

According to the CSC, the items seized included crystal methamphetamine, marijuana, hashish, tobacco, nicotine patches and cell phones with accessories. The total estimated institutional value of the seizure was $56,018.

Correctional Services of Canada says it uses a number of tools to prevent drugs from entering its institutions. These include ion scanners and drug-detector dogs to search buildings, personal property, inmates and visitors.

CSC says it is heightening measures to prevent contraband from entering its institutions "in order to help ensure a safe and secure environment for everyone."

CSC says it also works in partnership with local as well as regional police "to take action against those who attempt to introduce contraband into correctional institutions."

The CSC has set up a telephone tip line for all federal institutions so that it may receive additional information about activities relating to security at CSC installations. These may be related to drug use or trafficking "that may threaten the safety and security of visitors, inmates and staff members working at CSC institutions."

The CSC provides the following toll-free number, 18667803784, while maintaining that the information shared is protected and that callers will remain anonymous.

Recent fires in Laval



OCTOBER 29 | 7:40 AM // Building fire on Tousignan Street in the Auteuil area. Residential building. Flames visible. Code 10-07, intervention required.



The case for Phoenix Alternative High School

RENATA ISOPO
info@newsfirst.ca

"Don't fix it, it's not broken," says the community. "In fact, stop trying to break it," parents, students, and administrators add.

The Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board is requested to preserve Phoenix Alternative High School in its current quasi-autonomous form. Phoenix is Laval's only English-language alternative high school. It's a specialized institution that gives adolescents a second chance after mainstream schooling has failed them.

According to several sources among alumni, parents, teachers, and administrators, relocating its approximately 50 Secondary III–V students into Laval Senior Academy would risk weakening the relational, psychological, and pedagogical advantages that makes Phoenix effective.

Victoria Rebelo, a Phoenix alumna and organizer of the Save Phoenix Alternative High School campaign, argued publicly that relocation would threaten the school's identity, independence, and student support. "Phoenix exists because the conventional system did not meet the needs of students like me; its value cannot be preserved merely by calling it a separate entity after placing it inside a traditional high school," she stated.

Raison d'être

Founded in 1981, Phoenix has a proven track serving students who struggle in conventional schools but retain capacities to earn diplomas and pursue meaningful futures.

Its mission, say its supporters, extends beyond academic completion to personal growth, confidence, belonging, accountability, and preparation for life after secondary school.

The consensus among many teachers, parents, and administrators, points to mainstream schools as essential but not universally suitable. At various points in public statements and in conversations with TLN at public consultation gatherings convened to propose moving Phoenix students to Laval Senior Academy, several parents expressed concerns that "Large buildings, rigid routines, social pressure, and limited adult relationships can intensify anxiety, alienation, and failure for some students.

"Phoenix offers a small community in which students are known personally, supported consistently, and able to rebuild both their academic identity and sense of possibility," was the shared belief of most parents and more to the point, the understanding and confirmation of graduates who publicly spoke at the consultation session.

Responding to needs

To Victoria Rebelo, who spearheads a group of 100 graduates in a mission to save the school, "Phoenix is not a remedial add-on. It is a structural response to a genuine educational need. It interrupts a cycle of discouragement, exclusion, and invisibility by treating failure as a point of departure rather than permanent identity.

"Phoenix exists because the traditional school system failed students like me," Rebelo told listeners of CJAD Radio 800 in an on-air interview with Montreal Now host Aaron Rand. "Relocating Phoenix into a traditional school risks destroying the very environment that makes it successful," she said in conclusion, warning that "simply describing Phoenix as a separate entity does not in any way guarantee that its identity, independence or support it provides to its students will be preserved."

Parents who spoke to TLN at the Board's October 6, 2026 consultation agreed: "Phoenix can be labelled distinct on paper while losing the substantive autonomy that allows staff to build trust, adapt programming, protect privacy, and sustain belonging. For students who have already experienced stigma or failure in mainstream settings, a separate entrance or schedule within a large conventional school may not prevent the return of old wounds."

Victoria Rebelo frames the proposal as an equity issue: "This is shameful and disgusting. There are already not enough resources for children with special needs and alternative schools. It gives the impression that the Council of Commissioners favours neurotypical children over neurodivergent ones."

Phoenix serves students with special-education needs, mental-health challenges, neurodivergence, social anxiety, interrupted schooling, or prolonged disengagement. A public system is judged not only by how it serves students who thrive in conventional settings, but by whether it creates pathways for those who do not. Phoenix is that pathway.

To close or not to close

At the October 6, 2026 public consultation meeting, the Board presented scenarios that could close Phoenix and transfer its students elsewhere, while assigning Phoenix's building at 1105 rue Victor-Morin to CDC Vimont, whose lease expires in 2027.



Council of Commissioners' October 6, 2026 Public Assembly. In discussion school attendance zones and building use in Laval of Phoenix Alternative High School and the CDC Vimont Adult Education Centre.

Phoenix serves 50 students in Secondary III–V in a 22,800-square-foot building; CDC Vimont serves about 450 adult students in a 19,737-square-foot facility. The board faces declining enrollment -705 fewer Laval students than in 2020–21 and financial pressures. These constraints are real, but fiscal responsibility cannot be reduced to occupancy savings.

The decisive question is not whether Phoenix's building could house another program, but whether removing Phoenix from its own environment would diminish its capacity to serve the students for whom it was created.

The Board's consultation material identifies Phoenix's strengths: strong psycho-social support, belonging, meaningful student-staff relationships, and a supportive environment for students who have struggled in traditional schools. These are the features alternative education exists to provide, and the features most vulnerable to erosion in a co-located setting.

Phoenix's outcomes reinforce its value. In 2019–2020, 19 of 22 students returned the following year or completed Secondary V, an 86% retention rate. In 2022–2023, 12 of 16 students, 75%. Many graduates proceed to CEGEP or trade programs.

Although small by design, Phoenix's low enrollment reflects its specialized mission, not failure. Its success should be measured by retention, re-engagement, restored confidence, progression to further education, and dropout prevention, not headcount alone.

Growing concerns

Alumni leader Victoria Rebelo argues that a separate timetable, entrance, or wing cannot secure Phoenix's cultural, administrative, or pedagogical independence. For students who have experienced stigma or failure, co-location can reproduce the dynamics from which they sought refuge. A separate entrance may protect privacy, but it can also become a daily marker of difference; a separate schedule cannot erase the social hierarchy of a large school.

In a CBC interview with Hayden Carolan posted Oct. 10, 2026, Christina Cichon, Phoenix's principal from 2012 to 2015 reinforces this notion: "We should not be asking vulnerable students to find a place for themselves in the buildings currently available to us. We should be developing an environment tailored to their needs to support their success. Phoenix is more than a program, a place or a number on an enrollment list. It is a culture that has changed lives. That culture deserves to be protected and invested in."

Parents acknowledged the Board's financial pressures, but argued they do not justify treating Phoenix as disposable infrastructure. Low enrollment is not failure when the mandate is specialized, and a small building is not inefficient when it enables a model larger schools cannot replicate.

For these parents, a responsible alternative would preserve Phoenix while finding separate solutions for CDC Vimont, including adult-education space at Laval Senior Academy, alternative premises, partnerships, or a purpose-designed facility.

"The Council of Commissioners should reject any scenario that relocates Phoenix into Laval Senior Academy or otherwise compromises its autonomy," said Amanda Pujolle, a parent whose child does not fit in mainstream school and may need the Phoenix pathway. "It should affirm Phoenix's status quo: its own building, its own identity, its own staff culture, and its capacity to admit future students who need an alternative route through secondary education.

"Phoenix should be preserved not only for its current students, but for every future student who falls through the cracks of mainstream education and needs another lifeline," she added.

For more than four decades, Phoenix has changed lives. The question asked by many parents is: Should the Board protect that lifeline, not trade it for a short-term space solution.





Direct Answers

From Wayne & Tamara

Benedict Arnold

Q *While visiting his family six days before our 20th anniversary, my husband sent me an email saying we weren't happy together and he wanted a separation. But he never moved out. We lived day by day.*

The last five months he's emotionally and financially abandoned me and our three children. He blames all our marital problems on me. Needless to say after digging around I found out he's been having an affair for nine months. Days he was supposedly taking trips to our tree farms, he was with her and never called our kids. He even took her to our family vacation spot.

I think she represents freedom and absence of responsibility since her kids are grown. They can take off anytime and do whatever. I'm hoping she's just a booty call, but how do I deal with this home-wrecker if he's stupid enough to marry her?

My husband's first wife cheated on him and he was a basket case from it, so why would he do it to me? My lawyer will serve him in three days for divorce due to adultery. My heart is shattered, my soul broken forever.

How do I move on and trust another man again? What about my 10 and 14-year-old daughters? He looked them in the eye last month and told them women are evil and he would never get in a relationship again. Do I let them know what a lying, cheating, dishonorable man he is?

Carissa



Photo Credit: Janko Ferlic

A **Carissa, you have to tell your children the truth because an adulterer will tell them a lie. Your husband not only deceived you, he set up a new life for himself while stringing you along. You can't do that to your kids. How can you teach them honesty if you allow lies to stand in the middle of the family? Who can they believe if you start lying to them, too?**

There's another reason to tell the truth. Women who aren't forthright with their children, while their former husband is telling them whoppers, are often abandoned by those children when they grow older. Dad becomes the good guy while mom is labeled the one who broke up the family.

Calling his daughters evil is a vile act. It is psychological abuse of the first order, and it damages all three children. Your husband is eating away at his daughters' self-esteem and encouraging his son to demean women. A man who says things like that needs to be out of the house and away from young lives who need nurturance, not cruelty.

Your husband has not learned or grown from the experience of his first marriage. Notifying you by email was a cowardly act. It gives us his character in a nutshell. It invalidates his claim about your failings. But there is an obvious psychological explanation. He knows he is in the wrong.

Good recycles good, just as bad recycles bad. Honesty in relationships promotes more honesty; dishonesty promotes dishonesty. You must provide your children with what is right, but how can you do that when your heart is shattered?

The answer is simple. What you are going through follows a predictable pattern. If you try to find your way out by yourself, you are likely to flounder. But if you take the guidance of those who have been there before, you will recover more quickly than you can now imagine.

Depression, anger, denial, and grief are only a few of the emotions cycling through your head. An excellent way to recover from this trauma and begin your new life is by reading "Rebuilding," a book by Bruce Fisher and Robert Alberti.

And let your children know the facts. Their father got a girlfriend, and when you are married, you are not allowed to do that. If a person wants out of a marriage, the honorable course is divorce, not deceit.

Wayne & Tamara

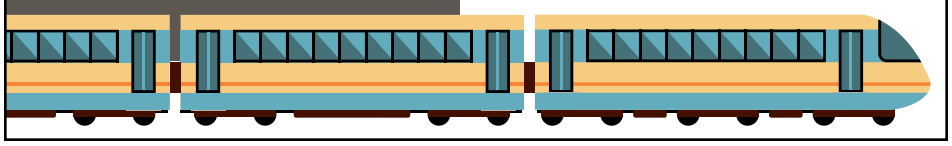
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Letter to the Editor

Dear editor,

Your Opinion & Editorial of October 21, 2026, (titled "Ottawa bet against fossil fuels and lost") to the effect that Ottawa's "anti-oil and gas obsession sacrificed Canada's economic growth for zero environmental gain", was a source of great surprise.

This Editorial is critical of "politicians across the Western Hemisphere, including Canada's leadership for the past decade or more and a significant portion of Canada's political class" that have insisted that fossil fuels are a relic of the past.

This Editorial relies on a new study of the Fraser Institute. However, the title of this study on climate change states that it is a "Fact-based assessment of costs, trade-offs and results". It does not state that it is a study of the causes of climate change. Despite what precedes, the Editorial itself deals mainly with these causes of climate change and does so in a way that is unfounded in science.

It is undisputed knowledge that carbon, oil and gas are all major sources of green house gas emissions. To say that carbon is the worst of these three and that we are therefore better off by not burning carbon and, instead, by going "full-throated" with the development of the other two, being oil and gas, is totally unreasonable. The logical thing to do is to progressively avoid all three and, instead, to switch to clean energy sources, including electricity.

The suggestion that "Prime Minister Mark Carney seems to recognize that the Trudeau government's climate policies were a failure" and that Mark Carney would have said in the past that "as times have changed, we must change our plan", is, I believe, a misunderstanding. It is my belief that what Mark Carney meant by saying "as times have changed", is a reference to Donald Trump ("drill baby drill") and, in particular, the tariffs imposed on Canada. The economic consequences of these tariffs on Canada is most likely what Mr. Carney was referring to in his statement that "times have changed".

The reference to China "continuing to build coal plants at a breakneck pace" is also inaccurate. This statement ignores and omits to take into account changes that are taking place in China in the past 10 to 15 years. Many reports, newspaper articles and at least one Canadian T.V. journalist (Mr. Markham Hislop) refer to these changes. One such article is titled "There's a race to power the future. China is pulling away" (New York Times, June 30, 2025). This in part states: "While China still burns more coal than the rest of the world and emits more climate pollution than the United States and Europe combined, its pivot to cleaner alternatives is happening at a breakneck speed. Not only does China already dominate global manufacturing of solar panels, wind turbines, batteries, electric vehicles and many other clean energy industries, but with each passing month it is widening its technological lead." We may not approve of the totalitarian regime or the human rights abuses in China, but we cannot ignore what is there taking place on clean energy.

The most shocking part of your Editorial is the conclusion that states: "For the sake of Canada's economy, the diversification of our trade and even for getting global emissions down, it's time for the federal government to embrace the full-throated development of Canada's oil and gas sector." This clearly ignores established science.

One such part of established science is a report of the Canadian Energy Outlook – 3rd edition, titled "Pathways for a net-zero Canada Horizon 2060". This is based on a joint multidisciplinary research of the HEC and the Polytechnique at the Université de Montréal published on June 19, 2024 (the full 143-page report can be found at: https://iet.polymtl.ca/perspectives-energetiques).

On page 60 the report states: "Reaching net zero by 2050 requires deep transformation of our energy production sector over the next 15 years, with considerable investments in electricity production and a significant drop in oil and gas emissions." On page 161 the report states: "To put it bluntly, unless a very major change of course is introduced on the very short term, essentially in the form of a 60% to 70% reduction in Canada's oil and gas production, we find that it is simply impossible for Canada to meet its 2030 target."

The Full Report contains analyses and information aimed at arriving at a 40% green-house gas emissions reduction by 2030 and a net-zero target by 2050.

Climate change has existential consequences. Your Editorial should not mislead its readers about the causes of climate change and of ways to deal with them.

Harry Tsimberis



HOROSCOPE

Week of **NOVEMBER 8 TO 14, 2026**

The luckiest signs this week:
AQUARIUS, PISCES AND ARIES

ARIES
A return to your studies brings a stimulating challenge that will align with your deepest aspirations. Keep pushing forward. Family support will boost your motivation and help you absorb valuable knowledge for a truly enriching future.

TAURUS
Evaluate each option carefully before making a decision. Joining a spiritual or wellness-oriented group will broaden your horizons and improve your daily wellbeing. Analyze every angle for a calm, fulfilling commitment.

GEMINI
When you're facing a major decision subject to outside pressure, trust your intuition. Your patience will sharpen your ideas and reveal meaningful solutions. If you take the time to assess things, your inner clarity will help you make the right choice.

CANCER
Thorough preparation before your next negotiation will help you achieve optimal results. You'll unlock both finances and career prospects by securing the ideal position. Strategy and confidence lead to a longawaited professional victory.

LEO
Treat yourself to a luxury shopping session to elevate your appearance. A polished image will open the door to higher positions. Invest in your presentation; charisma and success will naturally follow this transformation.

VIRGO
Choose the comfort of home and remote work to increase your efficiency. By doing a major cleanup, you'll create a clear, uncluttered space that improves your productivity and enhances your serenity. Domestic harmony becomes your strongest ally.

LIBRA
Defuse family confusion without delay. Clearly define your roles and choices through honest conversations. Direct communication dispels misunderstandings and restores a smooth, peaceful dynamic among your loved ones.

SCORPIO
A surprise promotion or interim role may place you in a management position after someone's departure. You'll receive a raise in recognition of your hard work. Take the reins and get ready for your leadership to propel your career to new heights.

SAGITTARIUS
A series of problems will finally resolve at work. Your inspiration will guide you toward goals that you'll achieve brilliantly. With clear direction, success is within reach. Move forward confidently, as everything is aligning for your most ambitious projects.

CAPRICORN
Renewal is essential, and it will arrive through multiple transformations. Your wellbeing is improving, thanks to inspiring changes. A form of spirituality is opening up, and this beautiful evolution will revitalize your body, mind and daily life.

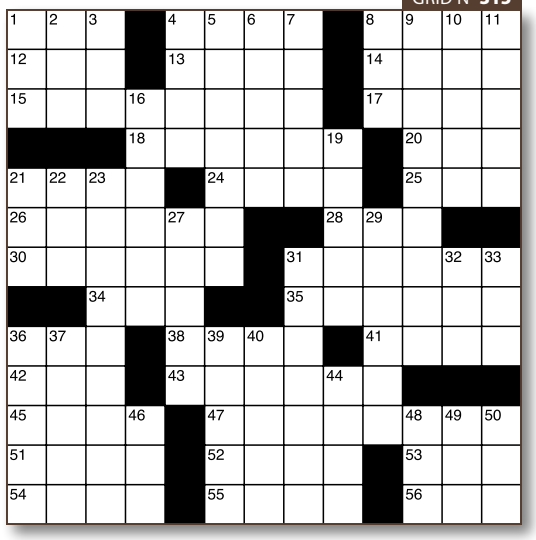
AQUARIUS
Take the lead in organizing an unforgettable activity with your friends. With persistence, you'll overcome shyness, and your level of commitment will determine the extent of your success. Your leadership will strengthen your confidence and help forge warmer bonds.

PISCES
Your many responsibilities require you to reorganize your priorities. Cooperation with loved ones becomes the key to harmonious planning and success. Work together for greater efficiency.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORD

GRID N° **315**



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ACROSS
1. Lingerie piece
4. Circle sections
8. Scratch
12. Vinegar's companion
13. Bog product
14. Shredded
15. Fruit pastry: 2 wds.
17. Potato
18. Idolized
20. Beseech
21. Thickly padded glove
24. Actor's goal
25. Foamy brew
26. Imprison
28. Is able
30. Kingdoms
31. Mexican dish
34. Cloth coloring
35. Laughing beasts
36. "Chances _____"
38. Away
41. Snares
42. Male sheep
43. Fill again
45. All right!
47. Horse with high odds: 2 wds.
51. Pierre's mom
52. "Of _____ I Sing"
53. Historic epoch
54. Invites
55. Back talk
56. VIP carpet color

DOWN
1. Large tropical snake
2. Split
3. High peak
4. Mimicked
5. Detailed accounts
6. Egyptian city
7. Pittsburgh product
8. "_____ Not Unusual"
9. Leading comedian: 2 wds.
10. Mean
11. Evade
16. Recently
19. Rot
21. Ruin
22. Fury
23. Company symbol
27. Smudge
29. Modifies
31. Kings' chairs
32. Chemist's workroom
33. Snaky letter
36. Odor
37. Autumn tools
39. Hat fabrics
40. Honolulu hello
44. Matures
46. Word of agreement
48. "Leave _____ to Heaven"
49. Miner's yield
50. Small child

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line.
You already have a few numbers to get you started.

Remember: You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

GRID N° **1008**

7		9						
				9	3			7
		2		8		4		
		6	3		4		8	
				6				
			1			5		4
		4			6		9	
	3	1				6		
8							1	

LAST ISSUE'S ANSWERS

CROSSWORD

S	P	A		M	A	S	S		N	O	S	E
T	O	W		A	N	T	E		O	A	K	S
A	P	E		I	D	O	L		I	R	I	S
R	E	S	I	N		P	E	T	S			
			D	E	W		C	H	E	E	S	E
S	O	I	L		I	O	T	A		V	I	A
E	N	T	E	R	T	A	I	N	M	E	N	T
A	C	E		I	N	T	O		A	S	K	S
T	E	M	P	L	E		N	I	T			
			R	E	S	T		R	H	I	N	O
D	A	T	A		S	A	G	A		M	E	N
I	R	O	N		E	X	I	T		P	A	L
G	E	E	K		D	I	N	E		S	T	Y

Sudoku

8	9	2	1	5	4	6	3	7
6	1	3	8	7	2	4	5	9
5	7	4	9	3	6	2	1	8
2	8	7	5	6	9	1	4	3
9	4	5	7	1	3	8	6	2
3	6	1	4	2	8	9	7	5
4	2	6	3	8	5	7	9	1
7	3	9	2	4	1	5	8	6
1	5	8	6	9	7	3	2	4



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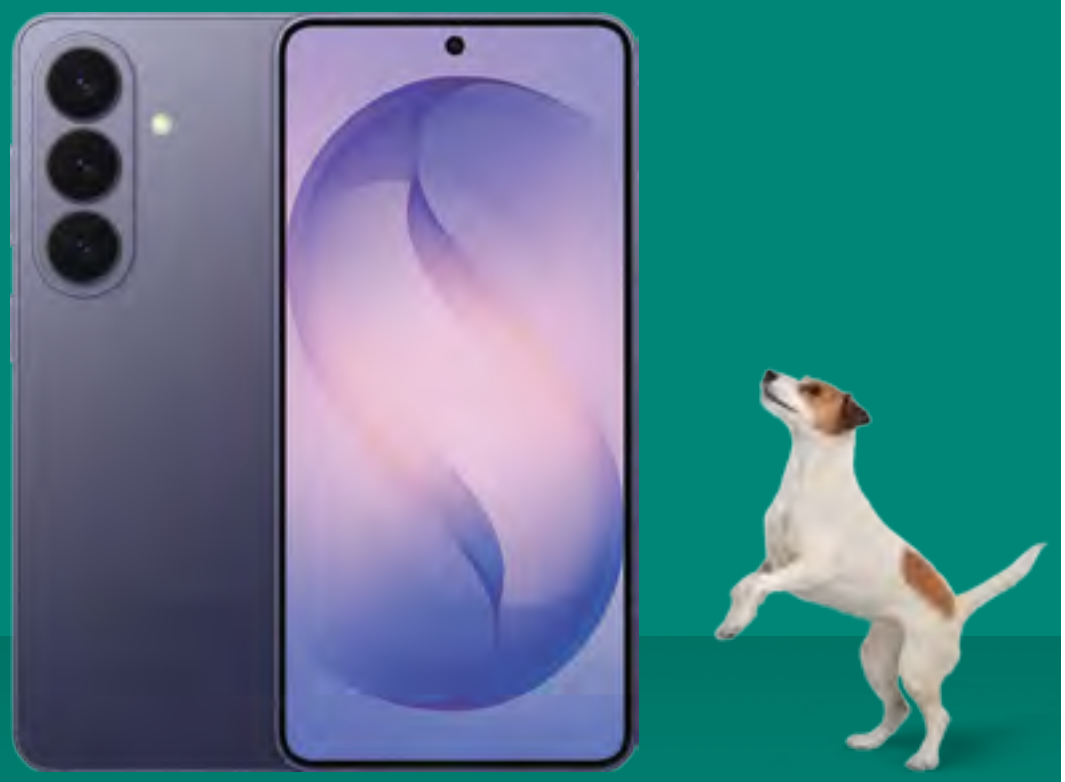
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