“If you’ve ever had the misfortune of watching a debate over a piece of legislation ... you know that it’s one canned speech followed by another canned speech, where Speaker B makes no attempt to address Speaker A’s point. They just read from a script with a different conclusion.”
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Representative democracy is in trouble.

Trust in democratic institutions has been declining for decades, but recently we’ve seen how this trend can be mobilized to do lasting damage when leaders amplify distrust in democratic institutions for their own gain. According to one former Member of Parliament: “We’re not just in a sort of post-truth politics, but we’re in a post-democratic politics.”

In 2018, it’s urgent that Canadians rehabilitate representative democracy as the middle ground between daily referendums and government by unchecked elites. At the centre of representative democracy are the representatives themselves—the critical link between citizens and their democratic institutions.

From 2008 to 2011, the Samara Centre for Democracy conducted the first-ever systematic series of exit interviews with former Members of Parliament. In the first research project, 80 interviews took place in the homes and communities of former Members of Parliament who sat in the 38th, 39th and 40th Parliaments (2004-2011). The discussions formed the basis of a series of research reports and the bestselling book *Tragedy in the Commons*.

In those interviews, we noticed something surprising: Even after years of public service, MPs lacked a clear, shared sense of what their job as political representatives actually was—how they should spend their time and energy to represent their constituents in Parliament and the community. So how can we expect parliamentarians to defend representative democracy if they don’t agree on what core purposes they are supposed to serve?

Last year, Samara, with the assistance of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians, again reached out to past representatives—this time to MPs who had sat in the 41st Parliament (2011–2015) and who resigned or were defeated in the 2015 general election. We wanted to understand if the MPs’ roles were changing—for better or worse. Once again, parliamentarians opened up about their experiences as representatives in one-on-one interviews that took place in their communities. More than 100 hours of interviews with 54 MPs representing all parties, in all parts of the country, made one thing clear: the problem of a “job with no description” has not been solved. In some ways, it has worsened. Parliamentarians are more cut off from the essential work of scrutiny, legislation and representation than before. If the work of an MP is hollowed out, elections themselves...
become hollow. Parliament is degraded, and as one former MP put it: “We don’t have a democracy, outside of that institution.” An intervention is needed.

This report series uses the stories and experiences of former Members of Parliament to make the case for a particular vision of political representation—one which is independent, thoughtful, engaged and empowered.

Yes, this is an ambitious view. Yes, this vision requires individuals to step up and share power. But Canadian democracy requires ambition, especially in a public climate of greater polarization, partisanship, cynicism and distrust. Democracy requires Canadians to strive to make it better, and the country deserves nothing less.

Each report in this series will focus on a key setting where all MPs spend significant time and energy. Each report will also share recommendations that advance the specific goals in these settings:

**In Parliament:** MPs—whether from the backbenches of the governing party or from the Opposition—should independently shape law and policy, and take the lead in careful scrutiny of Government, rather than going through the motions of debates and scrutiny under direction from their party centres.

**In the constituency:** MPs should find new and innovative ways to bring citizens into political processes, rather than doing the basic customer service provision that is properly the job of the public service.

**Within political parties:** MPs should open doors to citizens and participate in true deliberation about party policies, rather than gatekeeping and following the leaders.

Please follow Samara for future report releases in this series by signing up for our newsletter and following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
Elected representatives are critical in returning our representative democracy to good health. But in Canada, Members of Parliament have been drifting away for decades from the essential work citizens require of them—of legislation, representation and scrutiny.

It’s getting worse.

In 2017, Samara interviewed 54 former MPs who sat in the 41st Parliament (2011-2015). They tell a story of overbearing party leaders and their staff, and an even further loss of agency for individual MPs.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- The dominance of party leaders and partisanship pervades areas of Parliament where constructive work used to happen.

- In committees, where MPs are supposed to work freely across party lines, work is scripted and choreographed. Former MPs describe committees as busy work, and a waste of time.

- Parties use their control over committee membership to manage the caucus and punish dissent.

- Former MPs report a spike in partisan conflict over the control of time in Parliament, which has the effect of limiting debate and poisoning the atmosphere.

- Private Members’ Bills are seen by some former MPs as empty exercises.

- While many of these problems were particularly evident in the 41st Parliament, they are long-term problems which have not been fully addressed in the current Parliament.
Elected representatives are a part of the central and essential machinery of our democracy and they are meant to represent, include and engage their constituents. We cannot overlook their role in responding to the democratic malaise.

This report is the first in a series of three that will make a case for **MPs who are independent and empowered, thoughtful and engaged** in three environments: Parliament, the constituency and the party.

**In Parliament, that means that MPs:**

- Directly influence policy,
- Actively shape legislation and
- Take the lead in the careful and sophisticated scrutiny of government.

This vision is achievable, but institutional change is necessary to empower MPs. Throughout this report in the “Tools for the Job” sidebars, we offer recommendations to effect this change. We recommend that reform should start in committees—where MPs can be insulated from party control, equipped with the time and information to develop expertise, and given alternative parliamentary career paths outside of Cabinet that do not involve kowtowing to party leaders.
WHO PARTICIPATED? (54 MPs WERE INTERVIEWED)

PARTY

- Green/Independent/Forces et démocratie: 3
- Liberal: 3
- Conservative: 23
- NDP: 25

GENDER

- Female: 23
- Male: 31

REGION

- British Columbia: 7
- North: 0
- Prairies: 9
- Quebec: 16
- Ontario: 19
- Atlantic: 3

FORMER MINISTERS: 10

YEARS OF TOTAL EXPERIENCE IN PARLIAMENT: 400+

AVG. AGE AT TIME FIRST ELECTED: 38

Defeated in 2015 election: 48
Many former Members of Parliament describe a sense of awe and wonder at first entering Parliament. Asked to reflect on their fondest memories of public life, several returned to that earliest one, when they first claimed a seat in the House of Commons.

But this feeling—about the importance, the prestige, the centrality of the place—can be fleeting. As one MP recalls:

A man arrived and knocked on the door with a cane three times, and the Sergeant-at-Arms stood up with his sword and bowed to the door and opened the door, and then we walked down a hallway... It was so weird [the] pomp and circumstance in this beautiful place, in this special place. This heart of our parliamentary democracy. It was so overwhelming. And then I heard this guy give a speech, and I was like: “That’s it? This is the calibre that we are talking about?

**WHY START AT PARLIAMENT?**

This series begins by looking first at the work of the MP on Parliament Hill. The House sits for barely a third of the year, occupying a decreasing share of Members’ work (Figure 1). But the essential, most consequential work of an MP—the work that cannot be done by anyone else—is that which happens on Parliament Hill.

But what do MPs—those who are not in Cabinet—really do in Parliament? Samara’s first round of exit interviews with MPs, along with decades of research and journalism, have argued that while individual MPs may have some influence on the margins, they matter little in the grand scheme of things. Leaders have grown in strength and capacity relative to the party caucus. Unelected staffers to the leader—the “boys (and girls) in short pants”—carefully manage the party brand. As the MPs in our first round of interviews explained, any dissent from the party leadership is rare, inconsequential and swiftly punished. Step out of line, even on an ostensibly free vote, and “your name’s now on somebody’s hit list,” explained one former MP.
This is an age-old story. But there is also the perception that—despite what is now decades of vocal dissatisfaction from parliamentarians and observers—these long-term trends have been exacerbated in recent years. "We have the form of a parliamentary democracy, but not the substance," writes National Post columnist Andrew Coyne. "It has declined to such a point that it has become, or is about to become, or threatens to become, something else."2

**A FIRE DRILL WITH NO FIRE**

That impression is confirmed in interviews with former MPs who experienced the 41st Parliament. While MPs in previous Parliaments insisted that they did important work on the Hill—in committees, for example—many MPs in this round of interviewees stressed that, with the return of majority governments, they no longer do.

This is Parliament as eternal fire drill: Everyone observes protocol. MPs show up where they’re supposed to be, play their designated roles, and go through the time-consuming motions. But everything is preordained, there are no real consequences, and once everyone is accounted for, they return to their places, waiting for the next alarm to ring.
THE TRUE WORK OF AN MP

This condition is not inevitable. Other legislatures around the world have successfully breathed new life into old institutions, starting by reanimating parliamentarians. There are profound and tricky cultural problems to tackle; political leaders themselves feel the populism and anti-politics of the age. But this series starts with the technical and tactical: institutional and policy changes that will better equip and incentivize MPs to do the work of democratic legislators and hold government to account in the way that citizens should expect.

This paper first makes a case for what the job of the MP in Parliament ought to be. It then examines how far the reality departs from the ideal, on the basis of interviews and data, looking at MPs’ work in the House of Commons scrutinizing the Government, in committees and through Private Members’ Business. Each section concludes with a series of recommendations.

THE JOB DESCRIPTION: MPS ON THE HILL

A strong representative democracy requires MPs who are independent and empowered, thoughtful and engaged. These values should be reflected in all domains of MPs’ work. In Parliament, that means that MPs:

→ Directly influence policy,
→ Actively shape legislation, and
→ Take the lead in the careful and sophisticated scrutiny of government.

Alternative views of the appropriate role of MPs do exist. But resuscitating our representative democracy means paying attention to citizens' values, and their ideas about how politics should look. Despite the enduring power of parties over the electoral fortunes of politicians, some research suggests politics is more partisan than citizens are. Canadians want to see clear lines of accountability, but also collaboration across parties. Some research finds that citizens value independent-minded representatives, whether or not they agree with them. The vision of political representation presented here takes account of these facts. It is not beholden to tradition, or any one theory of Westminster Parliament, or the status quo. It is meant to reflect modern democratic norms in a way that can live inside and reinvigorate parliamentary institutions.

In practice, the job of an MP will vary depending on where they sit in the House,
with Opposition MPs as the central performers of some functions. But the essential job, founded on these values, can be constant. To make representation effective, MPs need to be able to exert direct influence on Government policy and legislation. This is an ambitious mandate. It entails some trade-offs and hard choices. It can be achieved, but MPs need a new toolkit.

**CONSTRUCTIVE DISMISSAL**

In their interviews, former MPs were given open-ended opportunities to talk about their work on Parliament Hill. The picture that emerges shows how far the job of the MP has wandered from the vision presented above.

MPs’ experiences are organized here around three (overlapping) domains of Parliamentary work for regular MPs: debates and scrutiny of Government, in the Chamber and beyond; committee work; and Private Members’ Business.
The first job of all MPs is and has always been to carefully watch the Government and identify problems in the way it manages programs and spending, as well as the legislation it proposes. This scrutiny has to be done in public, out loud. That is fundamentally why Parliament hosts hour upon hour of debates in the House of Commons. But the tool has become completely disconnected from the rationale. Parliament is scripted, theatrical and playing to an empty house.

“[The] thing about debates is we don’t really have debates in the House of Commons” was the frank assessment of a senior and long-tenured parliamentarian. “It’s a lot of reading your speeches and talking points and messages, and getting the points across,” but no one is allowed to be persuaded. He argued, in what shouldn’t be a radical statement, “You should actually be able to have discussions and change your mind on issues.”

According to another former backbench MP, "If you’ve ever had the misfortune of watching a debate over a piece of legislation ... you know that it’s one canned speech followed by another canned speech, where Speaker B makes no attempt to address Speaker A’s point. They just read from a script with a different conclusion."

The result? “Our Parliament [is] ... show business for ugly people.”

And yet, even if time is not used effectively, it remains a precious resource for MPs, particularly those in Opposition. In recent years, conflict has collected around attempts by the Government to remove that resource by limiting debate through time allocation.

WHAT IS TIME ALLOCATION?
MPs must vote to approve all new Government spending and legislation. But when the governing party holds the majority of seats, winning the votes is a foregone conclusion. As a result, delaying votes through tactics like filibusters or marathon voting sessions is one of the few tools that Opposition and backbench MPs can use to draw public attention to their concerns, and possibly to force the Government to make changes. Knowing this, successive Governments developed the tool of time allocation to limit parliamentary debates on new legislation. It occurs when the Government introduces a motion to restrict how much time will be spent debating a bill. If passed by MPs—which for a majority Government is virtually guaranteed—the motion allows the Government to limit debate and prevent delay tactics.
Given the incredible spike in the use of time allocation during the 41st Parliament (Figure 2), it’s not surprising that this issue was raised often by MPs—mostly, but not exclusively, those who had sat in Opposition. Not only did they feel time allocation affected their ability to scrutinize, but they also felt that it incrementally poisoned the atmosphere of Parliament. One MP described this effect when asked where their greatest frustration came from: “Simply mundane things. Sitting in the House and having time allocation imposed again.... Just sort of the very mundane but adversarial things, that kind of build up over time.”

The last Parliament saw by far the most use of time allocation since the tool was introduced permanently in 1968—more than double the previous high-water mark. But the problem has hardly resolved itself. In fact, the current Parliament is easily on track to see the second most frequent use of time allocation.
FOLLOW THE MONEY—IF YOU CAN

While time in Parliament is necessary for scrutinizing the Government, it’s far from sufficient. Members also require information, and this too was found to be lacking. Sometimes, the problem is that the large volume of information, which is provided in deliberately obscure and unintelligible ways—just prior to time-limited debates—makes meaningful scrutiny impossible. Scrutiny of the budget, for example, is seen as a kind of joke. Said one MP, who sat in opposition: “You’re given a binder this thick, and then you have a debate half an hour later. Like, give me a break. That’s not informed democracy. That’s autocracy faking it as democracy.”

A senior former parliamentarian with extensive governance experience discussed the problem:

The only piece that is completely dysfunctional, in my mind, is the budget. It is so opaque. *Unbelievably* opaque. It is not democratic. I can spend an hour ranting about how it needs to be changed and how horrific it is that even the Minister, half the time has no idea how it’s done … I know how to read a budget. That’s my specialty, and still it is *unbelievable* how things get hidden.

It’s hidden deliberately…. And it got worse. It got worse. Items that were there in [one] document are no longer there. So, you see specifically line items that just all of a sudden went to Appendix B, A, C—oh, it’s a D. For heaven’s sake.

Critical details, like when planned money will actually be spent, or whether money previously dedicated to a purpose actually got spent, are split out and hidden elsewhere in the mountain of pages that accompany a new budget or the public accounts. This creates real accountability problems, in the view of this MP: “How do you expect citizens to understand what’s truth and not truth? Never mind citizens, journalists—the journalists who are supposed to report out. The really good ones, the seasoned ones can read it. [But] there are so few of them.”

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

MPs also expressed frustration about access to information beyond the budget. One MP relates the surreal experience of seeking information about Canadian government activities from a foreign government:
Canada was going to become the chair of the Arctic Council. And we were looking at, “What is some work we’re doing scientifically in the north?” I found out we were doing joint research with the Americans. [But] we couldn’t get access to that information here in Canada, of what their work was. However, bizarrely, I could go and get that information from the Americans. But it was being held back by our Government... It was clearly because of the behaviour of the executive. The executive branch was constraining.

The same MP perceived a "kind of tightening of the noose around public servants to be able to just provide basic information" to MPs:

If you ask for a briefing, you wouldn’t just have a public servant telling you what the information is. There would always be a political staffer in the room with you.... This became something that was a changed behaviour.

A counterbalancing view, also expressed by several former MPs, was that some positive steps had been taken. In particular, the creation of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO)—an independent officer of Parliament to examine the budget, estimates and other financial documents—was cited on multiple occasions as an imperfect step forward, but progress nonetheless. The PBO was described as accessing and analyzing information in a way that MPs were simply unable to do. A former MP with vast experience on both sides of the floor over decades saw this as a necessity: "Individual parliamentarians don’t have the forensic accounting background, expertise or the manpower to scrutinize Government estimates the way that they [could] in the 1940s, ’50s, ’60s, and going back to the last century." MPs’ often positive attitudes toward the PBO is an interesting contribution to the debate over whether the growing number of officers of Parliament contribute to or detract from our parliamentary democracy.7 Clearly, this resource of professionalized oversight is important, but elected representatives still worry about falling short in upholding their vital duty to hold the Government accountable for its spending decisions.

A simple equation for good parliamentary scrutiny = time + information.

A simple equation for good parliamentary scrutiny = time + information. Former parliamentarians, and particularly those who sat recently in Opposition, feel like they did not have enough of either. And given, for example, the huge and sustained increase in the use of time allocation, there is some evidence to support the view that the problem of adversarial control of time is getting worse.
TOOLS FOR THE JOB: SCRUTINY
The House is not a home for serious, thoughtful scrutiny. There are a number of obstacles, some self-imposed, but others intrinsic to the complexity of modern governance. The goal for reforms in this area should be to give MPs modern tools to keep tabs on the hugely complex governance of a modern state. Possible reforms include:

**Transparent accounting:** Parliament’s financial scrutiny of Government is weak. The problem is technical, complex—and important. Fixing it requires that the Government find better ways to share information, so that Parliament can actually examine the spending it is asked to approve. The current Government has taken steps in a reform direction by aligning the timing of when MPs are asked to approve the overall plan (the budget) and department-specific planned spending (the estimates). But the new approach requires MPs to approve billions of dollars without clear information about where it’s going. It’s positive that the current Government has shown a willingness to experiment, but there is a long way to go to any cross-party consensus on a strong system for fiscal scrutiny. A first step, as outlined by the PBO, is for the executive to speed up its own internal spending review process. That way, improvements to the timing of spending votes don’t have to come at the expense of complete information for MPs.

**Open Parliament innovation:** Beyond fiscal scrutiny, the executive branch needs to be opened up for MPs to scrutinize its activities properly. Arguably, this work fits within the open government movement, which has advocates in countries across the world. As Canada assumes the chairmanship of the multinational Open Government Partnership in 2018, the federal government should make Canada a leader for sharing with parliamentarians public documents like tax-funded government research, and advice to government from civil servants, in forms that permit meaningful examination.

**Second chamber:** An idea that has recently picked up momentum is the creation of a second debating chamber of the House of Commons to exist in parallel to the main chamber, as exists in the United Kingdom and Australia. A second chamber could help relieve the time crunch and permit more time for debate, and more opportunities to hold the Government to account. More than that, it could also be a place for experimenting with procedure, before making changes to the main chamber. And it could even provide opportunities to reach the public in creative ways, like taking an important “take note” debate on the road.
While the majority of public attention is devoted to the Chamber of the House of Commons, the majority of MPs’ time is actually spent in committees. It is not easy to get the Canadian public excited about parliamentary committees. But there are reasons to believe committees could actually matter a great deal to our representative democracy.

For one, past research on Parliament has found committee to be the place where the real, substantive and satisfying work of parliamentarians is done.¹²

More importantly, away from the heckling and hyper-partisan atmosphere of the House of Commons, committees offer a unique opportunity for the kind of politics for which citizens often express a desire. They are where MPs can (in theory) be independent and thoughtful, where political representatives can deliberate in the open, cooperate across party lines, hash out difficult political differences with relative civility and hear from expert witnesses so that decisions are founded in evidence. Committees are also relatively open to the public, permitting individuals and organizations outside of politics to address decision-makers directly.
In theory. In practice, former parliamentarians have become stunningly dismissive of the committees they experienced. This is in stark contrast to Samara’s previous exit interviews, when MPs were quick to mention committees as a productive escape from the partisan, scripted and leader-dominated arena of the Chamber.¹³

**ENCROACHING PARTISANSHIP**

All of those forces have since pervaded the committee space in ways that they had not before. In the last Parliament, which saw the first majority Government after a five-year period of minority parliaments, committee work came to be tainted by the partisanship described in Chamber debates above. One former Government backbench MP, speaking of their own party, described the bizarre extent of toxic partisanship in committees:

> I thought committees were there to actually do something other than sort of steamroll through. I recall one time at committee, and this is when ... I really saw red. There was a typographical mistake in our legislation that was pointed out by the NDP in the clause-by-clause review. And we didn’t vote in favour of their amendment. The rationale I got from the people at committee was, “We don’t want to give them the win.” I thought, “Yes, I can see the press release now: NDP adds a comma to legislation.”

Party control resulted in committees that were more adversarial, but also scripted. MPs have progressively lost permission to make up their own minds, and even pick their own words. As one MP described, before committee met, “They have precommittee meetings. And that’s not when you discuss what’s going to happen in committee. You are told what’s going to happen in committee. And the [party] staff is all too happy to provide backbenchers with questions to ask.”

Another senior parliamentarian—and former Cabinet Minister—expressed the same frustration:
Several interviewees—from both Government and Opposition parties—pointed to the problem of having Parliamentary Secretaries present at committee. Parliamentary Secretaries are appointed to assist Ministers in their duties. In other words, they work for the executive. But they were also deployed to committees, basically (it was suggested) to instruct members in their parties on what to say and how to vote. Even a former Parliamentary Secretary expressed embarrassment:

We were Government at the time, [and] I was on a committee with [senior MPs from my party]. But they made me have these guys show me [their notes]—I had to oversee their notes. And make sure that they spoke for the Government.... They wanted me to be the heavy hand in it. And I didn't agree. Because I spoke for the Minister, but the Parliamentary Secretary's job is to replace the Minister in the House, and not to be so involved in committee.

The problem is not confined to the party in Government. Opposition critics, who are the designated spokespeople on a given issue for parties in Opposition, have been deployed to play largely the same role as Parliamentary Secretaries for Opposition MPs.
Some MPs worked hard to carve out space for independence, but that independence was largely at the indulgence of their parties. One interviewee, who “absolutely, unequivocally did not want to be spoon-fed,” focused on preparation before committee, and ultimately “earned [the party’s] trust. Because I didn’t screw up. I didn’t ask anything that’s going to make the Government look bad.” More troubling, some MPs were prepared to accept control over their ability to do their job. One interviewee lamented that there were “lots and lots and lots of MPs, on all sides of the aisle, that don’t care. They will happily go to committee and read the card that’s been handed to them … and then go back to whatever else they’re doing, sending emails, whatever else. I don’t think they feel the friction.”
COMMITTEES BY THE NUMBERS

Measures of committee activity suggest some variation year-to-year, with decline toward the end of the 41st and beginning of the 42nd Parliaments, and some reinvigoration recently (Figures 3-4). However, there are also anecdotal indications from the current Parliament that many of these problems persist. In the fall of 2017, for example, the Government reversed an earlier decision to remove Parliamentary Secretaries from committees, although they remain non-voting members. Several MPs both in Government and Opposition have also been removed from committees or had their appointments shuffled after dissenting from their parties’ positions.

*From Committee Activities and Expenditures Reports of the Liaison Committee.
MUSICAL CHAIRS

Managing committee membership is another opportunity for parties to exercise excessive control over what happens inside the room. One MP explained how gaming the membership could prevent an outcome that the leadership of a party did not want. The MP had worked to convince some committee members not to pass the amendments to a bill that their party leader was seeking:

I lobbyed hard to get the committee not to pass those amendments. And, in fact, I even think I had a couple of Members who were telling me that maybe they were going to not support the amendments. And it was amazing how [those Members] ended up in Washington, D.C., and Brussels, Belgium, on junkets that week. There was some musical chairs going on in the committee.

This power dynamic is revealed in an anecdote from a member who was successfully able to challenge the party line. The conflict occurred when a committee was meeting during the summer recess, which meant that most MPs were not in Ottawa and therefore not able to step in:

[I and the party whip] were having a discussion on one of the amendments. And I was adamant against it. I said, “I’ll vote for the [other party] before I vote for this one.” … I laid down the F-bomb a couple times. In the Whip’s office… And the lawyer comes in and says, “Well, you can’t do this.” And I said, “I tell you what.” I says, “The House is recessed. We’re the only ones here.” I said “You find a fucking spare for me. And I know you can’t.” … And I walked out. And I went back in the committee room and I just sat in my chair and waited. [They] came in and said, “OK. We’ll have your —your amendment will go through.”

… But you’ve got to stand up for yourself. And the only thing that saved me, probably, was that the House wasn’t sitting. So, they had no ability to get anybody [to replace me].
A secondary challenge presented by the rotating committee memberships is that MPs feel they’re not given the time to develop specialized knowledge in a policy field. This is another potential benefit of committee work that would, if realized, enhance MPs’ ability to scrutinize. But in the present system, partisan concerns and the interests of caucus management override any interest on the part of the parties to cultivate the expertise of individual MPs. Without time, knowledge and context, MPs cannot seriously police Government activity or ensure that community concerns are reflected in legislation.

**BUSY WORK FOR BACKBENCHERS?**

Finally, there was a broadly shared sense among MPs that the work of committee simply did not matter—that it had little or no impact on Government decision-making. “Why are you doing [a study] if it’s just going to collect dust?” asked one MP. “Committees [are seen] as busy work for backbenchers,” said another. Busy work, make-work projects, waste of time, waste of money—these descriptors arose again and again in interviews.

Rare positive experiences of committee were also instructive. In fact, some strong commonalities emerged in describing what made some committee work more edifying. Several MPs explained that the best committees were the largely forgotten or overlooked ones, because they were the least affected by partisanship and control. Length of tenure also mattered. Longer appointments permitted MPs to acquire expertise and forge relationships across party lines, as one MP relates:

[Committee] was one of the parts I liked the most about my experience as a Member of Parliament…. I am perfectly aware that this is not an experience that is widespread among MPs…. But I was on the same committee for 4.5 years, which is rare…. So I had a small group that was always the same…. There was really a way to interact with [committee members from other parties] so that we could progress for real…. And it is during this time that it is the most positive—when you have the impression that you can work with them, to make things happen.

“Without time, knowledge and context, MPs cannot seriously police Government activity or ensure that community concerns are reflected in legislation.”

Several MPs explained that the best committees were the largely forgotten or overlooked ones, because they were the least affected by partisanship and control.
Leadership on the committee also appears to matter a great deal:

A good Chair is probably the most important part. And that is very difficult. James Rajotte was a Chair for Finance—good, honest, one of the best Chairs. Because he was that kind of person. He was smart. Didn’t talk a lot. Used those same principles that I think are important.... You make sure everybody gets credit for the stuff that we’ve done in committee’s work.

A strong Chair, in the view of many MPs, could create the conditions for better committee work, and limit the extent of party interference.

**TOOLS FOR THE JOB: COMMITTEE**

Former MPs reported that committees have been thoroughly bent to the will of the parties. But they still hold real potential. Goals for reform should focus on insulating MPs from extensive party control so they can develop expertise and do serious work with Members across party lines. Possible changes include:

**Stronger chairs:** Chairs should be truly elected by Members, rather than the current system where committee appointments are controlled by the parties, who often ensure only one Member is nominated for the position. One way to accomplish this is to replicate the approach adopted in the United Kingdom and allow the entire House to elect the Chairs of each committee for the length of a Parliament, through a secret ballot election. Another would be to have committee members elect the Chair through a secret ballot that lists all committee members from the eligible party. Chairs would hold more permanent positions, with a direct mandate from individual MPs. The result would be more independent and fair-minded committee Chairs. Also, those Chair positions would come with real status: leadership positions within Parliament for MPs to aspire to and pursue, not by currying favour with party leaders, but by building relationships and developing credibility across party lines.

**Committee tenures:** Party caucuses should choose, by secret ballot, which of their colleagues hold their party’s seats on specific committees. Again, the result will be that MPs owe their position on committees to other backbench Members, rather than the party bosses. The positions should come with tenure: you are elected to sit on a committee for an entire Parliament (with provisions for removal only by the committee itself, and only with cause).

**Committees to the front:** Refreshed, revitalized committees would be a face of Parliament worth promoting. Parliamentary staff and administration should consider how to continue the positive work of recent years to publicize committee activity to the media and the public. Committees should themselves be creative in how to be more public-facing—including travelling to receive input from citizens and using technology to create new methods for consultation.
Private Members’ Business is the other major instrument that allows MPs to take an active role in policy and legislation. “Private Member” here just refers to MPs who are not a part of the executive. There are several reasons why Private Members’ Business could—in theory—represent an important tool in the tool belt of the thoughtful and independent-minded MP. It provides a rare opportunity for MPs to set the agenda, rather than just react to Government bills and conduct. It’s also a chance for MPs to draw attention to issues that are being neglected or to highlight novel solutions. And it can be an important lever for representing the views and concerns of citizens. Moreover, it is an area where the formal opportunities available to MPs have grown in some ways over the years, and this may be reflected in a large increase in the amount of Private Members’ Bills passed.16

MPs’ views on Private Members’ Business are mixed. On the one hand, it does provide a measure of freedom and autonomy—as long as the content of the bill or motion is relatively uncontroversial.17 It can be an opportunity for backbenchers to get their names in the newspaper, or attract attention in the constituency. In fact, MPs who have a bill or motion come up for debate are more likely to be re-elected even if the measure doesn’t pass, a trend researchers attribute to increased news coverage.18 But many feel the exercise is empty. There is also an enormous imbalance in resources and capacity between the executive and individual MPs, which raises questions about the ability of MPs to legislate independently.

WHAT IS PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS?

Private Members’ Business refers to bills and motions presented and sponsored by backbench MPs. Private Members’ Bills (PMBs) are proposed pieces of legislation written by MPs with help from parliamentary lawyers. Laws created through PMBs have the same status as Government laws, and follow a similar approval process. However, PMBs cannot require new spending or create new taxes.

Private Members’ Motions (PMM) can take several forms, including:

➡ Motions making non-binding declarations of opinion on an issue,
➡ Motions directing the House of Commons to do something (e.g. launch a new committee study); or
➡ Motions requiring the Government to produce documents.

Many PMBs and PMMs are proposed, but only a small subset receive time to be debated and voted on.
PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BILLS BY THE NUMBERS

The last Parliament actually saw a major increase in the passage of PMBs. More bills were passed overall, and more were passed in proportion to Government bills passed (Figure 5). At the same time, there are indications that the passage of PMBs has come to reflect partisan dynamics more strongly. In the last Parliament, successful PMBs belonged overwhelmingly to Members of the governing majority party; in previous Parliaments, no such tendency existed (Figure 6). So far in the 42nd Parliament, PMBs have receded again to a smaller share of the overall legislation that passes the House.

Figure 5

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BILLS VS GOVERNMENT BILLS RECEIVING ROYAL ASSENT

*Excludes sessions that lasted fewer than 100 days

Figure 6

SUCCESSFUL PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BILLS

Originated with:
- Parties in Opposition
- Party in Government
Most parliamentary time is used to debate Government bills, with only a few hours each week set aside for Private Members’ Business. As a result, while hundreds of PMBs will be introduced, only a small selection will actually be assigned time for debate and votes. Which items of Private Members Business receive consideration is determined by a lottery of eligible MPs, who can each put one item forward when their turn comes up. The expectation is that MPs hope for a high draw, but this is not always the case. One MP offered an honest recollection of how long it took to become comfortable with the responsibility of legislation. When they first arrived in Parliament:

We have to do a lottery for a Private Members’ Bill, and I’m going: “Oh my God, don’t draw me, don’t draw me, don’t draw me.” That’s how I felt, and thank God, I wasn’t at first ... But six months later, they’re drawing numbers again. I was like, “Oh boy.” ... I was saying, “don’t draw my number, please, don’t draw my number,” because I wasn’t ready. Everyone looked at me as, you know: “You should know everything.” I say, “Yeah, the only thing I know is where the bathrooms are.” But then on the third go for the draw, I think I was number 74. I was like, “Okay, I’m ready; let’s do it.” But it also took some other colleagues of mine to push me.

Other stories reflect the low capacity of MPs to take on this kind of work. One MP described a common practice among MPs of basically just reintroducing older bills, with small tweaks. Another MP recalled the day their office was first assigned a Parliamentary intern:

Her first day, I’ll never forget. I wish it was on video. She comes in and she says, “So, what do you want me to do?”... I said, “Well, I need to get a Private Members’ Bill through and I’ve never done this before. It deals with drugs; it deals with crystal meth and ecstasy, and there are a lot of people suffering from addiction in the country. I want to make it, for the first time, illegal to gather the precursors of those drugs. So, you’re going to quarterback that, and by the way, I need a letter to the Prime Minister tomorrow explaining what we’re going to do.” You should have seen her jaw drop.
FEEL-GOOD LEGISLATION

This lack of capacity is also reflected in the actual content of some PMBs. As one MP bluntly put it: “My thought on Private Members’ Bills are Private Members’ Bills are essentially useless. There are few good legislations.... I mean, they’re all feel-good legislation.” Generally (and there are important exceptions, like a motion in the 41st Parliament that laid the groundwork for the new electronic petitioning system), for Private Members’ Business to get anywhere, it had to either advance the Government’s position on an issue, or be empty of any real stakes. The result is lots of laws proclaiming new national days, for example—to the private dismay of some MPs: “Things like Tree Day. Sorry trees, but to waste time in Parliament when we have some very important issues, to waste time on Tree Day ... those are not the things that my constituents sent me to Parliament for.”

A PARTIAL LIST OF NEW NATIONAL DAYS, PROPOSED IN PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BILLS IN THE 41st PARLIAMENT ALONE:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Month</th>
<th>Day</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>National Hockey Day; Canadian Optimist Movement Awareness Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>National Appreciation Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Pope John Paul II Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Maple Leaf and Tulip Day, National Day of the Midwife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>National Health and Fitness Day, National Garden Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Government Awareness Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>National Local Food Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Leif Eriksson’s Day; All Buffleheads* Day (*that’s a duck)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>National Vitamin D Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On whether or not PMBs have any actual impact on law-making, MPs were somewhat divided. On the basis of the rate at which PMBs are passed, for example (Figure 5), there seems little reason to bother. As one former Cabinet Minister put it: “As a backbencher, if you knew how Cabinet really works, you would probably avoid a lot of wasted time and expectation.”

**TAKING THE LONG VIEW**

But several MPs insisted that while their bills and motions failed, some of the content was later adopted in Government bills, meaning they successfully influenced Government over the longer term. One MP talked about the pride they felt in the work, despite not passing a bill or motion, suggesting: “Political change does not happen overnight; we do not snap our fingers.” But this point, too, was contested. One MP charged: “There are some Members that do a Private Members’ Bill every three weeks on something to get publicity in their ridings. Then, if the Government brings in a bill [on a similar issue] four years later, they take credit for it.”

There are also vast differences in how MPs approach their PMB, and what kind of work they put in. Some formally introduce their bills for debate, and the work largely stops there. Others work tirelessly to build support, particularly among Members from other parties. And some experienced success as a result—like the MP who lobbied heavily among other parties, including the Liberals:

I took the time. Well over half the Liberal Caucus I met privately over dinner. Or lunch. Or beer. Or Scotch. Or coffee. And some of them repeatedly. And I persuaded them. So, to use [then-Liberal leader] Michael Ignatieff’s exact words: “You have infected and corrupted well over half my caucus to your bill. So it’s going to pass.”

This is an encouraging story, where one MP built support among Members from other parties, and the party leader ultimately deferred to his caucus members. It suggests some remaining potential in PMB work, if Members focus in on an issue, build relationships and succeed in the lottery.

“As a backbencher, if you knew how Cabinet really works, you would probably avoid a lot of wasted time and expectation.”
The other more positive takes tended to focus on the impact of PMBs beyond whatever content was specifically being voted on in the House. This was carefully laid out by one MP, an experienced legislator who spent time on both sides of the House, who explained, “Getting a bill passed was not the point.” Instead: “You can frame the debate and provide solutions. So, yes, there is power in the Private Members’ Bills, but you’ve got to understand [that].”

Another MP described PMB as an opportunity “to build a movement.” They gave an example of a bill they sponsored that dealt with public transit: “It was mostly a tool to [engage] different organizations ... lots and lots of groups that were pushing for funds... I got quite a good number of city councils endorsing it across the country. I did a cross-country tour on it, rallying support.”

Some MPs, therefore, do insist PMBs are a way to exercise leadership and influence over the longer term. But there is also much cynicism around how PMBs are actually used—and real questions about what, given limited capacity, individual MPs can actually accomplish.
TOOLS FOR THE JOB: PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

From the outside looking in, Private Members’ Business may appear to be an exercise in futility. But in interviews, MPs made the case that PMBs have a place in our Parliament. Reforming PMB should, therefore, aim to give MPs a real vehicle to set the agenda, frame issues, bring new solutions to the table, create pressure, build movements—and, sometimes, to legislate. Possible reforms include:

**Merit over luck:** Procedural tinkering will always have limited effects unless something is done to change how MPs and the public actually view PMBs. Accomplishing that might require a rejig, so that the best legislative work ends up on the top of the pile. The lottery system for determining what bills get debated provides everyone with an equal shot, but also results in less-worthy bills getting time and attention. Parliament should contemplate other ways to determine the order that Private Members’ Bills get debated. One existing proposal is to allow Members to collect supporters or signatories among other backbench MPs before the order is determined, so that the bills that get debated first are the ones that are seen by MPs as having the most merit. The proposal includes the provision that bills and motions would require support from MPs in other parties, to prevent Private Members’ Business from being used as a tool for advancing Government legislation by other means.

**Strengthen MPs’ ability to research:** The Library of Parliament exists to shrink the capacity gap between backbench MPs and the executive. It is integral to fostering more independent and thoughtful MPs. The budget of the Library was basically flat (after inflation) over the last decade. While 2017-18 saw a modest increase to meet demand, there’s a case to be made to spend even more to support a more robust representative democracy. New money should come with experiments—for example, the creation of parliamentary advisors, dedicated experts with small research teams working on particular policy files, who could brief parliamentarians on the evidence directly, without partisan seasoning. But low capacity is really more a symptom than a cause of disempowered MPs. Like the other reform proposals, this investment would only become truly valuable when MPs were free to exercise that capacity.
Conclusion: Reinvigorating the parliamentary work of MPs

So how do we get to a place where MPs are independent and thoughtful, engaged and empowered? Where their time in Parliament is spent directly influencing policy, actively shaping legislation and taking the lead in the careful, sophisticated scrutiny of government?

This paper has presented a number of reforms that respond to the problems identified by MPs in interviews.

To make meaningful change, priority must be given to reforms that can alter the incentive and power structure within Parliament. Accomplishing that—in some measure—is a necessary precondition for MPs reclaiming the critical work that is rightly theirs. Past reform measures, like the incremental strengthening of opportunities for Private Members’ Business, or committee reforms from the McGrath Committee report in the 1980s, did not sustain the hoped-for outcomes because they failed to permanently alter norms and power structures.

WHERE TO START?

Given the criteria above, committees are the best and most urgent site for reform. Not only are considerable parliamentary time and resources already dedicated to them, but committees also offer the best promise to empower MPs.

Committees might never be must-watch television. But they can be home to the kind of politics citizens often say they want: cross-partisan, substantive, evidence-based, civil and accessible. They could also provide a neat “package” for supporting the independence and thoughtfulness of MPs: space to learn about issues, specialize and then apply that expertise in the close consideration of bills and studies. The recommendation of one MP for fixing the party leader dominance of Parliament was simply: “Let your committees run wild.”

But it’s more than just the work that can be accomplished. One of the critical obstacles to MPs claiming agency is the incentive structure within Parliament. At the moment, career success only comes with a role in Cabinet, or on the frontbenches of the Opposition.
If committees are given new centrality, and Parliament changes how committee appointments work, the result would be positions of real prestige that aren’t controlled or doled out by parties. Committee chairs and positions on prominent committees would present “alternative career paths”25 —genuine leadership positions within Parliament for MPs to aspire to, which are attained not by toeing the party line, but by developing a reputation for thoughtfulness, fair-mindedness and independence.

Here, there is a clear case to follow: The UK Parliament has, within the past decade, seen a transformation of its committee system. In the midst of public backlash against Parliament, a number of reforms were undertaken, starting in 2009, including the electing of chairs by the whole House and providing tenure to committee members. There is fairly widespread agreement among researchers and observers that as a result of those reforms, Select Committees of the UK Parliament have come to occupy a new place of prominence. They are bolder in showing independence and challenging the Government, and now attract more public and media attention.26

**EMPOWERED REPRESENTATIVES, STRONGER DEMOCRACY**

Parliament as fire drill: Everyone takes their designated places and carries out a performance of their roles. But there is an emptiness in the display, a pervasive sense that it is all just getting in the way of the real work.

This story is not especially new. But nor has life and work at Parliament remained the same. Samara’s interviews with former MPs from the 41st Parliament find that the decline of parliamentarians as actors with agency and influence seems to have sped up. The danger is that with each passing Parliament, the shrunken role for MPs becomes more normalized. Without change, future exit interviews may find that MPs experience their own variation of something like Stockholm syndrome, as they become resigned to or even content with a system that simultaneously undermines them and their responsibilities as representatives.

Many of the former MPs we interviewed see and feel this danger, especially in the face of rising distrust and greater risk of authoritarianism around the world. They want to see their successor MPs be more empowered. They want the young constituent who is considering running for office in one, five or 20
years to understand that the job, the institution and our democracy itself need all elected representatives to be thoughtful and engaged, independent and empowered.

A growing populism in Canada and elsewhere is linked to both who our representatives are and how they work within our representative democracy. MPs should be empowered not for their own sake, nor for the sake of a Gothic Revival building next to a river—but because MPs are and will remain a critical link between citizens and the state. Citizens need to see public life as a worthwhile pursuit, to see themselves in their political leaders and to see their political leaders do the work they are elected to do.

**WHAT’S NEXT FOR THE SERIES?**

This report has sketched out what Samara thinks the job of an MP on Parliament Hill should be, and what it is. Next, the series will turn to the area that, according to many MPs, has become the bulk of their workload—their role in their constituencies. Interviews reveal that the constituency work of MPs has expanded over time—that the capacity of MPs is stretched thin by public service provision that should be done by the civil service, and an exhausting and ever-inflating “grip-and-grin” event circuit. The next report will reflect on how to reimagine the constituency role in order to connect local voices more meaningfully to our national democracy.

Find out about future report releases in this series by signing up for Samara’s newsletter and following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
METHODOLOGY

In early 2017, Samara contacted former Members of Parliament who retired or lost their seats after the 41st Parliament (2011 to 2015). As with the first MP Exit Interviews project, we chose to speak to former, rather than current, MPs because we felt they would be less constrained by the demands of office and, having stepped away, would have had time to reflect on their years in public life.

We interviewed 54 former MPs, ensuring that they came from all the major national political parties and most regions of the country. The distribution of interviewed MPs broadly reflects the makeup of the outgoing cohort of MPs in 2015. The Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians (CAFP) was our partner in this project and provided the initial letter of introduction and invitation to the former MPs on our behalf.

Interviews were organized using a semi-structured interview methodology. We created a standard question guide, but allowed the interviews to unfold organically, providing space for former MPs to lead the conversation. All interviews were conducted in person, often in the home or office of the former parliamentarian, in their preferred official language. The interviews ranged in length but were commonly approximately two hours long. Each interviewee was asked to sign an informed consent form, which authorized quoting from the interview with attribution.

All but two interviews were recorded, and all the audio records have been transcribed. Transcripts were coded and analyzed using the qualitative research software program NVivo.

We are committed to ensuring the results of this work are made widely available in order to advance public understanding of the role of political leadership and Parliament in Canada. Samara has the consent of the interviewees to deposit the interview in the National Archives once the MP Exit Interviews project is complete, and will do so. This project is among the most ambitious, large-scale and ongoing inquiries into the experiences of Members of Parliament in Canada, and we would like to ensure that its educational value is available to future generations.
END NOTES


3. For example, the 19th-century vision of a Westminster Parliament like Canada’s saw the role of the Government to govern, and all other MPs solely to scrutinize and oppose. Some have argued recently that it is unrealistic to imagine that Parliament will ever be anything but a venue for tight-knit parties to contest each other. See Jack Stilborn, 2017, “An alternative approach to Canadian House of Commons reform,” American Review of Canadian Studies 47 (1): 35-52.

4. See, for example, Preston Manning and André Turcotte, 2014, “Political parties—all of them—are failing to connect with Canadians,” The Globe and Mail, 10 February 2014. Available online from: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/whither-our-political-parties/article16773540/.

5. 70% of Canadians prefer “a Government where several parties have to collectively agree before a decision is made” to “a Government where one party governs and can make decisions on its own,” Vox Pop Labs Inc., 2017. MyDemocracy.ca: Online digital consultation and engagement platform – Final Report. Available online from: https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/eco-bcp/documents/ids/f/mydem/MyDemocracy.ca.PDF.


8. See also Ian Brodie, 2018, At the Centre of Government: The Prime Minister and the limits on political power, Kingston and Ottawa: McGill-Queen’s University Press.


10. Ibid.


13. Ibid.


16. Ian Brodie, 2018, At the Centre of Government: The Prime Minister and the limits on political power, Kingston and Ottawa: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 98.

17. There are important exceptions, and Ian Brodie, a former Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister Stephen Harper, has recently argued that some Private Members’ Bills do meaningfully disrupt the Government’s agenda—Brodie, 2018, 99.


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost, we are indebted to the vision of Alison Loat, Samara's co-founder and first Executive Director, who, with our board chair Michael MacMillan, was the driving force behind Volume I of the Member of Parliament Exit Interview project and the book Tragedy in the Commons. This research project was Samara's very first initiative, and served to define Samara's commitment to public leadership, research rigour and accessible ideas.

This second volume of the MP Exit Interviews project would not be possible without the support of many generous donors and foundations that support the Samara Centre for Democracy. We want to specifically thank the MacMillan Family Foundation, Bennett Jones, BMO Foundation, Rosamond Ivey, Bill Graham, and The John and Judy Bragg Family Foundation for their multi-year support of the project. We also want to thank donors Vass Bednar, Grant and Claudia Buchanan, Peter Grant, Tony Griffiths, Beth Haddon, Ernie and Verna Hilderman, Margaret Huber, Gerard Kennedy, Stephen D. Lister, Hon. Jim Peterson, Elaine Solway, Gary Solway, Nalini Stewart, Grace Westcott, Richard Woods and Leen Al Zaibak for helping us build early momentum for Volume II.

We are indebted to the generous support of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians (CAFP), and in particular to Executive Director Francis LeBlanc and the CAFP Board. The CAFP has supported the project since its inception, and without their involvement Samara would not be able to reach so many MPs after they leave public life.

Thank you also to the 54 former Members of Parliament who generously gave of their time to be interviewed, and shared their experiences and perspectives with us. A list of participating MPs is available in the Appendix. The willingness of these MPs to open their doors to us, and to take the time to share their stories in great depth, reflects their commitment to supporting the next generation of political leadership and building a positive public life in Canada.

We are also grateful to those who worked with us to organize and conduct the interviews. Christina Vietinghoff managed outreach, design and planning, and conducted interviews. Miriam Fahmy interviewed MPs primarily in Quebec, and contributed valued analysis to the project. Jane Hilderman, Michael MacMillan and Michael Morden interviewed everyone else. Ruth Ostrower and Erica Chan
coordinated the transportation and other logistics required to visit so many communities across Canada.

Laura Pin, Natalie Brunet, Terhas Ghebretecle and Louise Cockram analysed and coded the interview transcripts.

Jack Stilborn, Paul EJ Thomas and Nick Ruderman provided extremely helpful comments on earlier drafts of the report.

We thank Erin Tolley and Janice Neil for their advice and training to conduct successful recorded interviews on personal subjects. We also benefitted from the early advice and encouragement of a wide-ranging group of ad hoc advisors, who shared their ideas and shaped our thinking in the planning stages of this project. Thank you to Elamin Abdelmahmoud, Caroline Andrew, Catherine Annau, Michele Austin, Tom S. Axworthy, Stephen Azzi, Karim Bardeesy, Harvey Berkal, Karen Bird, Don Boudria, Morris A. Chochla, David Daubney, Benjamin Errett, Bill Fox, Rachel Gouin, Chris Hannay, Jennifer Hollett, Jean-Noé Landry, Grace Lore, Bernie Lucht, Alex Marland, Laura Payton, Jennifer Robson, Sean Speer and Paddy Torsney.
### APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPATING FORMER MPs

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member of Parliament</th>
<th>Riding</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Party Affiliation (recent)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hon. Diane Ablonczy</td>
<td>Calgary—Nose Hill</td>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
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<td>Hon. Chris Alexander</td>
<td>Ajax—Pickering</td>
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<td>Stella Ambler</td>
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<td>Paulina Ayala</td>
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<td>Joyce Bateman</td>
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<td>Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe</td>
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<td>Charmaine Borg</td>
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<td>NDP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hon. Ron Cannan</td>
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<td>Corneliu Chisu</td>
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<td>Olivia Chow</td>
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<td>Rob Clarke</td>
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<td>Hon. Irwin Cotler</td>
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<td>Libby Davies</td>
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<td>Paul Dewar</td>
<td>Ottawa Centre</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
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<td>Hon. Steven Fletcher</td>
<td>Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia</td>
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<td>Mylène Freeman</td>
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