

Holding the Government Accountable

Long-Shot to Achieve the *NEW* Fiscal Anchor

This government has repeatedly changed the fiscal anchors by which it - and others - monitor government's adherence to stated financial and economic objectives. Every time they miss an anchor, they just change it.



Budget 2025 jettisoned the traditional federal *debt to GDP ratio* and replaced it with a new *deficit to GDP ratio*. The Parliamentary Budget Officer - an independent fiscal accountability officer - calculates there is **only a 7.5% chance of the government achieving that new marker**. He says "there's a lot less room [to borrow] than there used to be" and "the next time there's an economic shock - and there will be, and economic shocks mean recessions, pandemics, terrorist attacks - and when those shocks happen, there is far less space, fiscal space, than we had previously".

To see a video of the exchange, please visit my social media pages: Facebook, Instagram, or X.

This government has spent Canada into a corner with few options in the event of a crisis. 🍁

Trade Deals Don't Benefit Canadians

Prime Minister Carney's centerpiece promise to Canadians during the 2025 election was that he could deal effectively with the Americans on trade challenges. His original promise was to get it done by July 21, but so far, there is nothing to show. That is, nothing for Canadians. After he visited Washington in October, the US signed an \$80 billion nuclear deal with Mr. Carney's former company, Brookfield. In Question Period on November

26, I asked about the Prime Minister going from "el-bows up" in April to "who cares" in November.

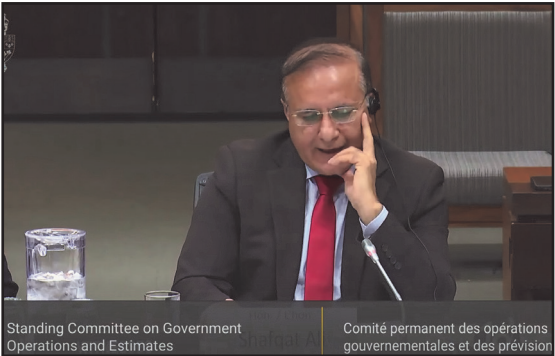
When can Canadians expect any progress on trade negotiations? 🍁



Unknown Costs to Re-size the Public Service

At the *Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates* on November 27, I asked the Hon. Shafqat Ali (MP Brampton—Chinguacousy Park), President of the Treasury Board, about the cost of his plan to reduce the size of the public service by offering early retirement incentive bonuses. Despite having said on October 30 that he would provide that information to the Committee, he was still unable to disclose costs, and unable to explain why. In fact, he contested having committed to providing the information, despite it being on record. He also couldn't explain **why cash incentives are even necessary since the staff complement is declining through voluntary attrition**. This Minister is not being accountable to Canadians. 🍁

To see a video of the exchange, please visit my social media pages: Facebook, Instagram, or X.



How Can I Help?

My Calgary and Ottawa offices are open to serve you. Please call, e-mail, or make an appointment in advance, if you have a challenge with a government department or an issue you wish to discuss.

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PARLIAMENTARY OVERVIEW

Parliament resumes for our winter/spring session on January 26. This newsletter highlights some of the issues that my colleagues and I will focus on, in addition, of course, to any other issues that emerge. This session is scheduled to conclude on June 19.

Parliament only sat for 73 days in 2025. Normally Parliament sits 130 days, but in 2025 the government prorogued Parliament, called an election, did not recall Parliament until the end of May and did not make up for lost time with a summer sitting. The government passed only six bills in 2025, three of which were routine spending authorizations, not changes to the law.

One was **C-5, the One Canadian Economy Act**, which became law on June 26. This legislation empowers the Cabinet (the Prime Minister in reality) to select certain infrastructure projects to be exempted from specific laws and reviews.

Conservatives voted in favour of C-5 on the grounds that it is at least a start toward resolving Canada's serious infrastructure deficit and declining prosperity.

We maintain that Canada must repeal the bad laws obstructing construction of infrastructure, rather than create new legislation allowing Cabinet to skirt those laws on select projects.

The *Memorandum of Understanding* signed by Alberta and Canada in November may lead to a pipeline being constructed under provisions in C-5, although the success of that MoU must be measured by shovels in the ground, not photo ops and announcements.

Conservatives identified four priorities for this session: the cost of living crisis; the immigration fiasco; escalating crime; and high unemployment.

My Conservative colleagues and I tried to collaborate with the government by proposing practical ideas for all four shared priorities, but the Liberals acted on none of them.

In fact, Liberal MPs on the Finance Committee actually filibustered the study of their own bills, halting the legislative process, rather than debate amendments proposed in good faith by all three opposition parties.

It's a new year and a new start. Conservatives will support good legislation proposed by the Liberal government when we see it, while scrutinizing bills and proposing improvements when needed. That's our job. We will also propose new or alternative solutions to emerging issues, and press the government to keep their promises. We will not hesitate to call out the government when they make an error or exercise poor judgement. That too, is our job. 🍁

Pat Kelly

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CURRENT LEGISLATION



Here is a summary of legislation that has been proposed by the government but is still in the legislative process. Opposition Members will examine these bills in Committees and in the House proposing changes and improvements.

Second Reading in the House

These bills have been tabled in the House at First Reading but must pass Second Reading before going for Committee study.

- C-2:** Stronge Borders Act (still before the House but replaced by C-12)
- C-10:** Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation
- C-16:** Protecting Victims Act
- C-18:** Canada-Indonesia Economic Partnership

In Committee

These bills have passed Second Reading in the House and have been referred to Committees for detailed examination and expert witness testimony.

- C-8:** An Act Respecting Cyber-Security
- C-9:** An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime, and access to religious or cultural places)
- C-11:** Military Justice System Modernization
- C-13:** Implementation of the United Kingdom joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership
- C-14:** Bail and Sentencing Reform
- C-15:** Budget Implementation Act

Referred to the Senate

These bills have passed Committee study and Third Reading in the House and been referred to the Senate for study and review. Amendments may be proposed by the Senate and sent back to the House.

- C-4:** Making Life More Affordable for Canadians
- C-12:** Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders (replaces the abandoned Bill C-2)



Private Members' Bills

There are 55 bills sponsored by individual MPs that have passed First Reading in the House, but not advanced to Second Reading and Committee consideration. Most will not proceed due to time constraints. PMBs are debated in an order determined by random draw after an election. These three have currently advanced to committees for detailed study:

C-225: *An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Intimate Partner Violence)*. Moved by Frank Caputo, Conservative MP for Kamloops-Thompson-Nicola (BC).

C-234: *Living Donor Recognition Medal Act*. Moved by Ziad Aboultaif, Conservative MP for Edmonton-Manning (AB).

C-241: *National Strategy for Flood and Drought Forecasting*. Moved by Tatiana Auguste, Liberal MP for Terrebonne (QC).

For more detail on legislation before Parliament, scan this code or go to:
<https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bills?chamber=1&page=1>



C-16: Protecting Victims Act

Crime is on the rise. Since 2015, human trafficking has increased 84%, sexual assaults are up 76%, and violent crime is up almost 55%. **Conservatives are critical of Trudeau era "catch-and-release" bail laws, disregarding mandatory minimum sentence laws, and any laws that prioritize criminals over victims.**

Bill C-16 contains some constructive provisions. Banning "deepfakes" of intimate partners (originally proposed by Conservative MP Michelle Rempel Garner) will keep Canadian women safer from non-consensual intimate images. C-16 provides for mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse material; and makes murder of an intimate partner automatically a first-degree charge (as proposed by Conservative MP Frank Caputo's Bill C-225). Conservatives have also proposed mandatory minimum sentences for all forms of extortion, which was omitted from Bill C-16, but the bill does introduce "sextortion" as an aggravating factor in sentencing.

Despite these beneficial clauses, **Bill C-16 empowers judges to disregard Criminal Code mandatory minimum sentences** (except for murder and treason). Conservatives support mandatory sentences for aggravated sexual assault with a gun, human trafficking, and multiple violent firearms offences including extortion and drive by shootings. **Parliament previously established mandatory minimums for good reasons.**

C-14: Bail and Sentencing Reform

This bill expands the application of a "reverse onus" for bail applications in very serious crime cases, requires judges to consider the number and seriousness of outstanding charges,

and encourages judges to impose mandatory weapons and other restrictions in cases of extortion, organized crime, motor-vehicle theft and breaking-and-entering. Bill C-14 also adds new consecutive-sentence rules for repeat violent offences and other serious crimes.

Conservatives support strengthening these provisions as an urgent response to rising crime. However, C-14 should be stronger, especially with respect to repeat and violent offenders.

C-9: Hate propaganda, Hate crime, and Access to Religious or Cultural Places

C-9's stated objectives include criminalizing displaying symbols that belong to listed terrorist organisations during the commission of an existing offence, and to make it an offence to prevent access to religious or cultural places through intimidation. These are tools that law enforcement agencies have asked for in response to growing incidents of demonstrations that promote terrorist organizations, and protestors that target places of worship and faith affiliated schools and seniors' residences.

The bill also contains troubling threats to freedom of expression and was further amended during its committee study to remove existing protections (the "good faith" defence) for freedom of religion and freedom of expression from the Criminal Code. **Conservatives believe more determined enforcement and prosecution under Canada's existing laws is the best way to protect Canadians without threatening freedom of expression or freedom of religion. Therefore we oppose Bill C-9 as drafted.**

C-8: Cyber-Security

Conservatives agree Canada's critical infrastructure — telecom, finance, energy, transportation — needs strong protection from cyber threats, consistent with our long-standing concern about national security and foreign interference. Conservatives supported studying C-8 at Committee, and will raise issues including:

- Stronger oversight of ministerial orders
- Adequate privacy protections
- Avoiding unchecked executive power in cybersecurity directives
- Clearer limits on what the government can compel telecom providers to do

These issues are similar to those raised by legal analysts and civil liberties groups about broad power.

C-15: Budget Implementation

The *Budget Implementation Act* was referred to the Finance Committee, of which I am a member, in December. I opposed the budget because of its staggering deficit, lack of credible fiscal anchors, absence of productivity enhancing regulatory reform, or any plan to return to the balanced budget the government inherited in 2015. **There will be many meetings with expert witnesses and a detailed clause by clause review in the coming weeks.**

Food Cost Hikes Continue at Unsustainable Pace

November's Consumer Price Index shows that year-over-year food inflation continues to grow unsustainably:

- Groceries: up by 4.7%
- Fresh or frozen meat: 14.2%
- Fresh or frozen beef: 17.7%
- Fresh or frozen chicken: 7.5%
- Fresh fruit: 4.4%
- Oranges: 7.7%
- Berries: 7.5%
- Lettuce: 26.9%
- Coffee and Tea: 23.8%
- Infant formula: 5.7%



The CPI Report says, "grocery price inflation is the highest since the end of 2023, with grocery prices 4.7% higher than November 2024. Even more concerning, food prices are up by 1.9% just compared to October 2025 - nearly exceeding [in one month] the Bank of Canada's **annual** food inflation target."

Food Banks Canada said we now live in a country "**where hunger is normalized**".

Prime Minister Carney said during the 2025 election that **Canadians should judge him by prices at the till**. Under his watch, food prices are not coming down or even stabilizing. In fact, the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University says **families can expect to pay \$995 more in 2026, up to \$17, 571 for a family of four.**

This is not a global problem. In the U.S., food inflation was 2.6% in November. In E.U. countries, it averaged 2.7% in November, and was as low as 0.9% in France.

Conservatives propose to remove taxes including the Industrial Carbon Tax which raises costs throughout the supply chain, remove food packaging regulations that raise costs, repeal the clean fuel standard that adds up to 17 cents/litre to gas for transportation, and **tackle the underlying cause of inflation which is excess government spending and debt.**