



BOB BENZEN

Member of Parliament
Calgary Heritage



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

A Message from your M.P.

Dear Constituents,

It has been a difficult year, one in which the fallout from the pandemic has posed a crisis for many and people have turned to their federal representatives to help navigate the hardships presented by the new reality. I am proud of my staff who have been working alongside me every day to connect constituents with the supports and services they need in these trying times.

As your Member of Parliament, it helps me greatly to hear directly from constituents about the challenges they face and the expectations they have for their federal government. That is why I am writing to you today, to invite you to identify needs and to share your thoughts with

me on how government can best work on your behalf in these current circumstances.

To that end, I am asking every household to complete the survey included with this publication and return it to me with your views and suggestions for the way forward as we contemplate next steps towards reopening the economy.

I value your input and thank you for taking time to correspond. If my office can assist you with a federal matter, we are here to help as best we can during these difficult times.

Best regards,

CONTACT BOB

OTTAWA OFFICE

811 Justice Building
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
Tel. 613-992-0250
Fax. 613-992-0251

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE

1010-10201 Southport Rd SW
Calgary AB T2W 4X9
Tel. 403-253-7990
Fax. 403-253-8203

SOCIAL MEDIA

/Bob Benzen

@BobBenzen

BobBenzen

E-MAIL / ONLINE

Bob.Benzen@Parl.gc.ca

BobBenzenMP.ca

NATIONAL DEFENCE AND MISCONDUCT

The always important work of the federal Standing Committee on National Defence has taken on added urgency in past weeks as members complete a study on sexual misconduct and harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces, in light of recent allegations of the same made against Chiefs of Defence Staff.

Witnesses testifying before our committee have focused on the need for a culture change in the Forces that begins with its leadership. Members have heard troubling accounts of the Liberal Minister of National Defence's own lack of action when confronted with evidence of misconduct within the chain of command — from the former military ombudsman in particular.

The study continues as of this writing, and I would not presuppose its outcome, but it is my hope the contributions by members of all parties on this committee result in meaningful recommendations that lead to systemic changes in policy and accountability as it relates to the leadership of the Armed Forces, including the Minister of Defence.

Revelations on this issue seem to arise near daily, from the recent resignation of a senior female military commander in protest of, and in response to, the allegations of sexual misconduct among senior leadership, to the news that the Prime Minister was aware of serious allegations against the former Chief of the Defence Staff for three years after the fact.

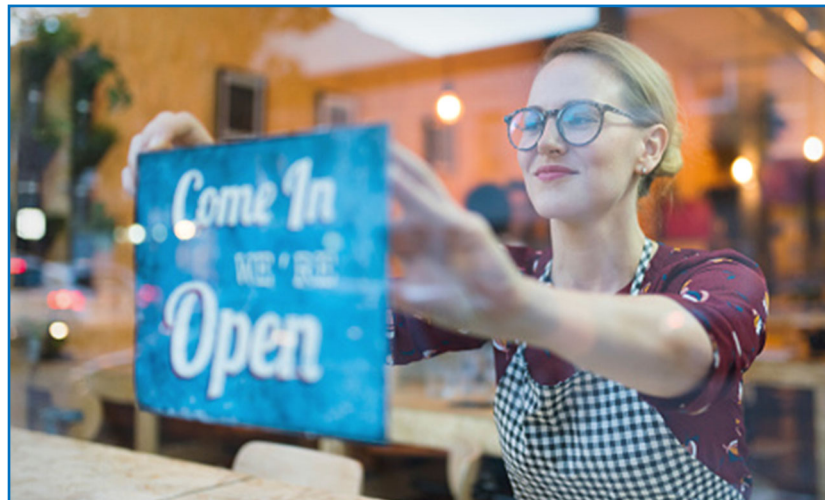
We must deal head on with the problems being uncovered within our Armed Forces. It will take a lot of work to fix. We must strive for an Armed Forces where men and women may serve their country equally and without fear of harassment or retribution in their workplace as they protect Canadians.

Tools at hand to reopen our economy

With businesses at risk in Calgary Heritage and across the country, the federal Liberals must present a budget – their first in two years – that includes measures directed to safely reopening our economy and restoring the massive amount of jobs that have been lost since the start of the pandemic.

The federal Liberals have left Canada with the lowest vaccination rate, the biggest deficit, and one of the highest unemployment rates in the G7. This is not how it should be.

Our recovery from the biggest economic crisis since the Great Depression will require measures that allow Canadians to get back to work in every sector. This is no time to “reimagine” the national economy, as the Liberals have proposed to do. Rather, it is



Canadians need a plan to safely
REOPEN THE ECONOMY
so we can get back to work.

time to support all the traditional pillars of our economy that have the potential to get Canadians back to work, and especially the stricken energy, aviation and tourism sectors

in Alberta and elsewhere.

Continued lockdowns causing ongoing societal and economic destruction can not always be the government's answer to an ongoing public health crisis. It is time we replace these models with tools we already have at our disposal to protect Canadians, among them better vaccine rollout programs; pre- and post-arrival rapid testing; and at-home quarantine measures, to name a few.

Conservatives continue to call on the government to do so, and to enact an evidence-based plan that protects Canadians in the pandemic while restoring their ability to pursue a livelihood.

Conservatives in Parliament will continue to work for those left behind by Justin Trudeau and focus on getting Canadians working again.

Albertans' rapid test a Covid game-changer

Vaccines and rapid testing. The reopening of our economy and an end to the societal lockdowns that have devastated entire sectors depend on easy, nation-wide access to both.

A Calgary-based biotechnology company, CardiAI, holds one of the two keys, having developed the world's most advanced PCR diagnostic test that can provide results in a matter of minutes rather than days.

It is a homegrown scientific success story, with potential to be a Covid game-changer as well as to provide economic opportunity for manufacturing and jobs in the biotech industry in Alberta.

I have been working with the company to push Health Canada for an expedited review, and I am happy to report progress on getting this important product over the bureaucratic hurdles. Getting this product into mass development will reduce waiting

times for diagnoses by making them available within hours rather than days, and contribute to returning us to a semblance of normalcy.

One of the lessons learned from this pandemic is that Canada must develop our own domestic capability to produce personal protection equipment, vaccines, rapid testing, and other necessities rather than continuing to be at the mercy of international companies and other countries that will serve their own national needs ahead of ours.

And here we have a Calgary company that has done world-class research, has an innovative product to supply for worldwide consumption, and wants to keep its manufacturing in Alberta. Success stories like this help diversify our economy while improving our domestic public health security.

This is the kind of innovation that we need to promote more of in Canada. CardiAI's



MP Bob Benzen recently toured CardiAI's Calgary facility. From left to right are: Dr. Raman Koul, Research and Development Head; MP Benzen; MP Tom Kmiec; Brian Milloy, Co-Founder, President and CEO of Levvel Inc.; Patrick Kirkwood, Vice-President of Sales, Marketing and Investor Relations; Dr. Anmol Kapoor, Founder and CEO of CardiAI; MP Jasraj Singh Hallan.

research, meanwhile, continues apace.

The company has received regulatory approval to begin recruiting symptomatic Covid patients for clinical trials. The objective of this study is to evaluate medications that

show promise with symptoms related to Covid, to determine whether they prevent the clinical progression of COVID-19.

Contact CardiAI Inc. directly if you are interested in participating in the company's clinical trials.

Liberals striking out on crime prevention

Violent crime is a serious problem. It requires serious solutions. Unfortunately, Canadians will not get them from our current government. In less than a year, the Trudeau government has taken three swings at violent crime and missed every time. Their “solutions” will cost billions and may increase Canadians’ exposure to violent crime.

On May 1, 2020, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau acted by order-in-council to ban some 1,500 types of firearms. He referred to them as “assault-style” firearms, a made-up term designed for maximum emotional impact. Most were, in fact, modern sporting firearms with styling that makes them look unfamiliar to the average Canadian but does not make them more dangerous. A significant number were pre-Second World War collectors’ items, custom-made big game rifles and other innocuous specialized gear.

The prime minister also falsely claimed that these firearms had no purpose other than mass killings. Is he seriously alleging that the tens of thousands of RCMP-vetted Canadians who currently own such firearms are mass murderers in waiting?

Bill C-21, introduced on Feb. 16, was a grab-bag of sundry firearms-related measures. Most notably, it purported to provide a framework to compensate owners for their now-banned firearms and to allow cities to prohibit handguns. The proposed compensation scheme promises to be another multibillion-dollar boondoggle just like the ill-fated long-gun registry.

As Public Safety Minister Bill Blair himself acknowledged, wherever such schemes have been tried, they have simply driven unregistered firearms underground. Twice the government tried to interest consultants in designing such a scheme, and twice they failed to attract bidders as consulting firms wisely saw the perils of venturing into a bureaucratic quagmire that promises years of court challenges and wrangling over the amounts of compensation due. Current owners of these firearms who reject the government’s offer will be prohibited from using

them in any way, seriously infringing on their property rights.

The second pillar of Bill C-21 was a provision to allow cities to ban handguns, which are already subject to very strict controls. Since municipalities are under provincial jurisdiction, this measure is sure to face years of constitutional challenges by provinces that oppose this intrusion into their jurisdiction. If it does survive these challenges, it will set up an administrative nightmare of thousands of different sets of rules. Quebec alone has over 1,100 towns, villages and other municipalities, each of which would be entitled to enact its own firearms bylaws. This measure has rightly been panned by both pro and anti-gun groups as well as police associations.

Then on Feb. 18, the government introduced Bill C-22. This bill was pitched as the solution to the overrepresentation of marginalized groups in Canada’s prisons. In fact, however, it is likely to increase the violent offences that these same groups suffer from the most. It eliminates mandatory minimum sentences for a host of violent crimes, including using a firearm in the commission of an offence and robbery and extortion with a firearm. Surely these are crimes for which serious penalties should remain mandatory.

The Trudeau government has now struck out in its three swings at violent crime. But what should be done to keep Canadians safe?

First, we need to stop scapegoating the firearms community and reduce their bureaucratic burden. Every dollar

OPINION

BOB BENZEN, MP
Calgary Heritage



spent processing useless paperwork is a dollar that cannot be spent reducing violent crime.

Second, we need better data and analysis. It is shocking that neither the government nor the RCMP can provide even basic data required to develop sensible policies.

Third, we need closer scrutiny of those with a proven track record of violating firearms laws. Amazingly, every legal gun owner in Canada is required to report changes of address, but those with Firearms Prohibition Orders are not. Since no one tracks these dangerous individuals, is it any surprise that they account for a high percentage of those in-

involved in repeat firearms offences? We need tough penalties, imposed with certainty, to dissuade criminals from using weapons. Finally, the drug trade that fuels so much gang violence must be made unprofitable through stricter border controls to reduce supply and easier access to rehabilitation programs to reduce demand.

The real tragedy is that continuing with the government’s failed approaches wastes time and money that could be spent making Canadians safer.

The only good news is that bills C-21 and C-22 will probably not make it through Parliament before Canadians go to the polls to choose whether they want a data-driven anti-crime policy that directly addresses violence or more empty words and virtue-signaling.

(Note: This commentary first appeared in the Calgary Herald, March 4, 2021)

DO YOU BELIEVE BILL C-21, THE LIBERALS’ PLAN TO PROHIBIT FIREARMS IN CANADA, WILL PREVENT VIOLENT CRIME AS THEY CLAIM?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Maybe

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY / TOWN

PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE

TELEPHONE

EMAIL

COMMENTS

Protecting free speech paramount

Canada today is divided like never before.

We face a crisis of confidence regarding not just specific policies, but the very foundations of our democracy. Increasingly, we hear calls to suppress views regarded as wrong-headed or harmful.

This is exactly the opposite of what is needed.

The best cure for division is more free speech, not less.

Some argue that we should just trust science. But labelling something science cannot put it beyond questioning.

The credibility of science rests on open debate. Not long ago, repugnant theories about race and other now discredited ideas reflected the scientific consensus of the day. It was only open, often acrimoni-

ous debate that resulted in their overwhelming rejection.

In a diverse society harmony must be built on the solid foundation that only open debate can provide.

Vigorous discussion of both goals and methods must be encouraged.

The reason Parliament has an Official Opposition to critique government policy is that it makes policy better, and the freedom to criticize increases the legitimacy of the outcome. But free speech must not end at the doors of Parliament.

It must infuse our whole society.

Free speech is messy, but it is what makes our society strong. We must

all do our part. Governments must stop subsidizing media they find congenial and freezing out those they dislike.

Courts must limit libel chill. Educators must prepare students to debate and to differentiate between reality and rhetoric. Journalists must spread understanding, not sensationalism.

And ordinary Canadians must accept being offended at times as the price of living in a society where we are not afraid to seek, and to stand up for, the truth as we see it.

Visit my website at: www.BobBenzenMP.ca and let me know your thoughts.

...# **Bob Benzen, M.P.**
Calgary Heritage

REPORT FROM PARLIAMENT

The spring session of Parliament has seen the Liberal government irresponsibly rush passage of bills that required far more detailed study by members of the House of Commons, all in an effort to clear their legislative agenda ahead of a possible election rumoured for later this year.

Perhaps the most troubling bill to be fast-tracked by the Liberals was the Medical Assistance in Death (MAID) Bill C-7, which included amendments by the Senate that authorize assisted suicide for mentally ill individuals.

The original legislation proposed by the Liberals did not include this provision, and its inclusion in the final bill represents a betrayal of Canadians on all sides of this debate who worked to advocate for responsible safeguards on this vital issue.

The Liberals have also routinely used the pandemic as cover to rush economic measures without detailed costings and without leaving sufficient time for Parliamentarians to study and debate. And this after they prorogued Parliament last summer in a bid to avoid accountability to federal committees probing various government scandals.

We can all agree on the need to quickly provide support to Canadians in a time of crisis. But that does not void the role of Parliament to responsibly evaluate value for money. Taxpayers are funding unprecedented spending that is currently running nearly \$400 Billion more than what Canada will generate in revenues this year. That kind of spending is unsustainable and a burden to future taxpayers. It highlights the need for Parliamentary oversight to best direct investments to areas of greatest need.

Conservatives are fighting for a balanced approach that restores accountability - a principle the Liberals have tried to sidestep at every opportunity.



BOB BENZEN
Member of Parliament
1010, 10201 Southport Rd SW
Calgary AB T2W 4X9

FOLD

