



Justice Centre
for Constitutional Freedoms

Restoring Freedom in Canada

An Agenda for Parliament and the Senate

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Contents

About Restoring Freedom in Canada	3
Defeat Bill C-34, the <i>Safe Social Media Act</i>	4
Defeat Bill C-22, the <i>Lawful Access Act</i>	5
Protect female-only spaces for women and girls	6
Protect religious expression from “hate” prosecutions	7
Restore freedom of the press in Canada	8
Restore the public's right to access information	9
Protect our sovereignty from unaccountable foreign bodies	10
Abolish race-based punishments	11
Abolish laws based on race and ancestry	12
Remove the state from counselling rooms	13
Stop expanding physician-assisted suicide	14
Restore medical autonomy and choice.....	15
Repeal the <i>Online Streaming Act</i>	16
Repeal the <i>Online News Act</i>	17
Clearly define AI regulations	18
Reject a central bank digital currency	19
Safeguard privacy rights	20
Reject a national digital ID for Canadians.....	21
About the Justice Centre.....	22

About Restoring Freedom in Canada

Canada's Parliament and Senate have enormous power to either protect freedom or erode it. As Parliament returns on September 21, 2026, and as the Senate returns on September 28, 2026, Canadians should expect their elected representatives to make freedom a priority.

This report identifies 18 areas where Canada's elected and unelected officials can take concrete steps to restore constitutional freedoms, limit government overreach, strengthen democratic accountability, and allow Canadians to live their lives privately without state surveillance.

This paper spans some of the most critical issues facing Canada today:

- privacy and surveillance
- freedom of expression
- medical autonomy
- digital identity
- central bank digital currency
- online regulation
- property rights
- access to information
- criminal law
- equality before the law
- national sovereignty
- the proper limits of administrative power

Some of these issues require Parliament to repeal legislation that has gone too far. Others require stronger safeguards, clearer statutory limits, or a willingness to reconsider policies that have expanded government authority at the expense of individual liberty.

The purpose of this paper is not simply to identify problems. It is to set out a practical standard against which Canadians can judge Parliament's work. On each of these 18 issues, legislators have the power to act. They can narrow intrusive laws, restore protections that have been weakened, reject unnecessary new powers, and reaffirm the principle that government exists to serve citizens, not to manage every aspect of their lives. Canadians should expect Parliament to defend freedom deliberately and consistently.

Defeat Bill C-34, the *Safe Social Media Act*

Call to action: *Defeat Bill C-34 in its current form*

Freedom and the protection of children online are not opposing values. Government and law enforcement must preserve both together.

Bill C-34, the *Safe Social Media Act*, would prohibit children under 16 from maintaining accounts on designated social media services. To make that ban effective, social media platforms would be [forced](#) to implement age-verification or age-estimation systems. In practice, adults would also have to prove their age, potentially through government ID, facial estimation, payment information, or third-party verification to access the social media accounts they use every day for news, work, entertainment, and expression. A law aimed at minors can therefore become an identity screen for the entire population. France's Constitutional Council recently [struck down](#) a nearly identical under-15 social media ban on precisely these grounds.

The Bill also requires platforms to mitigate exposure to “harmful content,” including content that “foments hatred.” Faced with penalties reaching the greater of \$10 million or three percent of global revenue, platforms would have a powerful incentive to suppress non-criminal expression rather than risk non-compliance.

Enforcement would rest with a new Digital Safety Commission. Its Cabinet-appointed members could investigate companies, compel document disclosure, issue orders, grant exemptions, and impose penalties. Many rules would be written, and standards created, after Parliament passes the Bill. Currently, Canadians are left in the dark about how exactly the *Safe Social Media Act* will be used to restrict freedom of expression.

As Parliament reconvenes, Bill C-34 remains at second reading. Parliament should reject the Bill in its current form. Police should enforce existing laws against exploitation, threats, abuse, criminal hate speech, and other illegal content. Canada can protect children without requiring every Canadian to surrender privacy or accept a powerful regulator of online speech.

Defeat Bill C-22, the *Lawful Access Act*

Call to action: *Defeat Bill C-22 in its current form*

Privacy includes the freedom to communicate, associate, and think without the state mapping your digital life.

[Bill C-22](#), the *Lawful Access Act*, would expand government access to Canadians' digital information. Police could demand, without prior judicial authorization, that a telecommunications provider confirm whether it serves a particular person or identifier. A judge could then order the production of subscriber information on the lower threshold of "reasonable grounds to suspect," rather than reasonable grounds to believe, that a crime has been committed.

Bill C-22 empowers government to require that private companies preserve and structure information in advance for easier state access. The Bill would allow Ottawa to impose technical obligations on designated electronic service providers so that information sought by authorities can be extracted, organized, and accessed readily. The Bill would also authorize government to require core service providers to retain metadata – including transmission data – for up to six months.

Metadata is not trivial. It is not the words one uses in communications, but the record of who contacted whom, when, from where, and on what device. Metadata can reveal relationships, habits, movements, and intimate details of a person's life. The Supreme Court has recognized that privacy and anonymity in digital information lie near the heart of the right to be secure against unreasonable search and seizure – protected by section 8 of the *Charter*.

Government must justify any intrusion into private life. Yet Bill C-22 builds the architecture for such intrusions – by the state or by hackers – before any crime has been committed that would justify those intrusions.

The Senate should reject Bill C-22 in its current form. Superficial amendments to this law, which will create permanent surveillance infrastructure, will not suffice. Canadians deserve better than pre-crime surveillance architecture that weakens the privacy and security of all Canadians.

Protect female-only spaces for women and girls

Call to action: *End the practice of forcibly confining women prisoners alongside trans-identifying men*

Women and girls have a right to female-only spaces where biological males may not enter. Such spaces include crisis centres, competitive sporting events, washrooms and changerooms, and prisons. In Canada today, women and girls are often forced to share these spaces with trans-identifying men, and are thereby exposed to violence and psychological harm.

Today, women's prisons across Canada have [opened](#) their doors to trans-identifying men with fully intact male genitalia. As [explained](#) in current federal policy, "We place them in institutions aligned with their gender identity (men, woman, non-binary, etcetera) or expression, if they prefer, regardless of their sex (anatomy)." At least two female inmates have been [victims](#) of rape since Correctional Service Canada implemented its "gender identity" policy in 2017.

Women in Canadian prisons now face the risk of sexual assault by trans-identifying men with intact male genitalia, along with the risk of sexually transmitted infections. Women in prison have reported experiencing stalking, being followed to bathrooms and showers, and trans-identifying men remaining directly outside of private stalls. Women have reported being subjected to sexually inappropriate comments. Some women report suffering from anxiety, anger, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal ideation. They report flashbacks of stressful, violent, and emotionally disturbing events involving men.

According to a 2022 government study, [more](#) than 90 percent of incarcerated trans-identifying men were incarcerated for violent offences, and 44 percent had a history of sexual offences. Women in prisons should not have to serve their time alongside male rapists. Women are entitled to have female-only spaces.

Subjecting women to these conditions violates their right to security of the person, protected by section 7 of the *Charter*, and their right to be protected against cruel and unusual treatment or punishment, protected by section 12 of the *Charter*.

Men should not be allowed in women's prisons.

Protect religious expression from “hate” prosecutions

Call to action: Repeal Bill C-9, the *Combatting Hate Act*

Freedom of expression matters most when expression is controversial, offensive, or unpopular. Canada’s officials are increasingly forgetting that principle.

Bill C-9, the *Combatting Hate Act*, [received](#) Royal Assent on June 18, 2026, and came into force 30 days later. It created a new offence for wilfully promoting hatred through the display of arbitrarily chosen political symbols; a separate hate-motivated offence layered onto federal crimes; and new offences for intimidating or obstructing access to religious and other designated community spaces. It also repealed the *Criminal Code* defence for the good-faith expression of religious opinions or beliefs based on religious texts.

This last change is especially serious. In *R. v. Keegstra*, the Supreme Court narrowly [upheld](#) Canada’s hate-propaganda law as a justified restriction on free expression, while expressly relying on its stringent intent requirement, narrow definition of hatred, and statutory defences to limit the law’s reach. Removing one of those defences alters the constitutional balance the Supreme Court considered relevant.

In its place, Parliament added only a “for greater certainty” clause, which states that legitimate religious, political, educational, or scientific discussion remains lawful if it does not wilfully promote hatred. This is circular: it offers no real defence beyond restating that the offence is not committed if it is not committed.

Other provisions are similarly difficult to justify. Hate motivation was already an aggravating factor at sentencing. Threats, intimidation, mischief, and obstruction were already criminal offences. Creating overlapping offences adds complexity and gives prosecutors additional tools without clearly filling a gap in the law.

Protecting Canadians from hate-motivated violence is a legitimate objective. But criminal law must remain precise, necessary, and restrained, especially where the freedoms of conscience, religion, and expression are concerned.

Restore freedom of the press in Canada

Call to action: Abolish all government funding of media

A free and independent press is foundational to any free society. Section 2(b) of the *Charter* protects “freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.” Expressly mentioned in Canada’s Constitution as worthy of protection, a free press holds government officials, both elected and unelected, to account. However, when media depend on government for their sustenance, media can no longer report the news without bias.

Today, Canada’s media industry is heavily supported by government subsidies. The CBC alone [received](#) \$1.58 billion in taxpayer funding in 2025-26. Supposedly “private” newsrooms and publishers are also heavily subsidized: approximately [\\$70 million](#) per year through the journalism labour tax credit, [\\$20 million](#) through the Local Journalism Initiative, and [\\$75-85 million](#) through the Canada Periodical Fund.

Ottawa spends an additional [\\$78 million](#) per year on federal advertising, much of it placed with Canadian outlets. This is yet another stream of taxpayer money that props up the same industry. On top of this, even more funding goes towards film and television through the Canada Media Fund, Telefilm, and the National Film Board of Canada. Most of this taxpayer-supported spending goes to a short list of public and approved private recipients, not to an open market. Invariably, recipients of taxpayers’ money are those who support (or at least refrain from opposing) the government’s ideological agenda.

Former CBC journalists Tara Henley, Travis Dhanraj, Jason Unrau, and Marianne Klowak have publicly raised concerns about CBC's ideological conformity, political balance, and its treatment of perspectives that challenge prevailing or government-aligned narratives. Ms. Klowak [stated](#) that, during Covid, the CBC was “pushing propaganda.”

Despite massive subsidies extracted from taxpayers and given to media, public confidence and trust in media continues to decline. Restoring freedom of the press in Canada requires ending taxpayer subsidies for media.

Restore the public's right to access information

Call to action: Amend the Access to Information Act to strengthen Canadians' capacity to hold governments to account

Canada's federal *Access to Information Act* grants the public a legal right to access government records. Yet the system increasingly fails to produce information when it matters, if at all. In 2024–25, only 64.5 [percent](#) of access requests were answered within mandatory timelines, even after lengthy extensions were counted. In 2025–26, the Information Commissioner received 5,839 complaints pertaining to access to information requests, nearly [half](#) of which involved delays or extensions.

Nothing in the law requires officials to write down who approved a program, what advice they acted upon, or why they chose one course of action over another. The Treasury Board itself [put](#) it this way: “There is no legislative framework for information management.” So, even when Canadians do get a response, files are often late, heavily redacted, or missing the very documents that would explain government decisions.

The Prime Minister's Office and ministers' offices remain outside much of the access regime. Cabinet confidences are [excluded](#) from the Act and cannot be independently reviewed by the Information Commissioner. Even Canada's historical record is difficult to access. A systemic investigation of Library and Archives Canada [found](#) that almost 80 percent of completed requests during the examined period missed statutory timelines. That investigation identified the absence of a government-wide declassification system as a barrier to transparency.

A democracy cannot function on information released years too late, buried beneath exemptions, or never recorded. As former Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin [put](#) it, “For the people to effectively participate and vote, they must know and understand what the government is doing.”

Parliament should require officials to create and keep a written record of decisions and the reasons for them, strengthen mandatory deadlines, bring ministers' offices within the Act, subject Cabinet-confidence claims to independent review, create a public-interest override, and establish automatic declassification rules. Secrecy should be the exception, and governments should have to justify it.

Protect our sovereignty from unaccountable foreign bodies

Call to action: *The federal government must not enter binding agreements with international organizations that compromise its ability to serve the interests of Canadians*

Canada should cooperate with other countries while still fully preserving our own sovereignty.

Canada bound itself to the World Health Organization's International Health Regulations, which require countries to "[work together for global health security](#)," particularly during serious public health threats. These obligations can constrain domestic decision-making on borders, travel, medical countermeasures, and emergency powers. International health cooperation has value, but the terms of that cooperation must remain subject to Canadian voters and the Parliament they elect. Democratic accountability is a foundational [principle](#) of Canada's Constitution. Therefore, no international body should be able to dictate or impose measures that override the judgment of Canada's elected government and Parliament.

In 2017, World Economic Forum (WEF) founder Klaus Schwab publicly [boasted](#) of the global organization's influence in Canada, claiming that it had "penetrate[d] the cabinets" and that more than half of Prime Minister Trudeau's cabinet were former WEF Young Global Leaders. Several prominent Trudeau ministers were indeed WEF alumni. Chrystia Freeland went further, [serving](#) on the WEF's Board of Trustees while simultaneously serving as Canada's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister.

This is contrary to Canadian democracy and sovereignty. The WEF answers to no Canadian voter.

Canada should cooperate confidently with the world but always on terms consistent with Canadian sovereignty, democratic accountability, and the rights and freedoms of Canadians.

Abolish race-based punishments

Call to action: Uphold justice and the rule of law by abolishing race-based sentencing decisions

Justice should not change according to a person's skin colour, ancestry, or citizenship status. Yet, prosecutions and sentencing decisions increasingly permit exactly that.

Canadian courts now consider race, culture, Indigenous ancestry, and immigration consequences when determining sentences. The “Gladue principles” [require](#) judges to consider the circumstances of Indigenous offenders, while “Impact of Race and Culture Assessments” can [influence](#) sentencing for black offenders. Courts have also [reduced](#) sentences to avoid triggering the deportation of non-citizens.

Criminal Code section 718.2 [requires](#) that a sentence be similar to sentences imposed on similar offenders for similar offences committed in similar circumstances, but section 718.2(e) states that Aboriginal offenders should be treated with leniency. Sentences have been reduced for those convicted of manslaughter, attempted murder, incest, and drug trafficking, violating the principle of equality. Offenders who commit comparable crimes receive different punishment because of ancestry, race, or immigration status.

Section 15 of the *Charter* [states](#), “Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination.” This principle is foundational to public confidence in justice. It is a promise to victims as well as to those guilty of violating the *Criminal Code*. A parent whose child was killed, or a sister who was sexually assaulted, deserve to know that justice and the rule of law will not be undermined because a judge is conscious of factors that are irrelevant to a crime.

Parliament should repeal section 718.2(e) from the *Criminal Code*, and the justice system should stop using Impact of Race and Culture Assessments.

Abolish laws based on race and ancestry

Call to action: *Abolish the practice of affording special privileges to Canadians based on race and ancestry*

In February 2026, Ottawa and the Musqueam Indian Band secretly [signed](#) a Rights Recognition Agreement covering much of Greater Vancouver, without any public consultation or input from landowners who might be affected. The agreement recognizes Musqueam “Rights and Title,” defined to include Aboriginal title and self-government rights, and establishes a framework for incremental implementation.

Musqueam and the federal government have both [said](#) that fee-simple title (private property ownership) is unaffected, and Ottawa argues that a bilateral federal agreement cannot alter provincially regulated private property rights.

But the Agreement text raises legitimate questions. It recognizes Aboriginal title within a vast “Musqueam Territory” while failing to define the nature, scope, or geographic extent of that title. It contains no explicit private-property carve-out. And it contemplates future agreements implementing Musqueam rights, jurisdiction, and decision-making through a “nation-to-nation” relationship. Those ambiguities matter because of the 2025 BC Supreme Court [ruling](#) in *Cowichan*, recognizing Aboriginal title over land in Richmond that was purchased in good faith. The BC government [warned](#) that the ruling could have “significant unintended consequences for fee-simple private property rights” and appealed the decision.

Section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982* [recognizes](#) and affirms the “aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada” as they existed in 1982. This should be interpreted in harmony with other legal principles including the supremacy of God, the rule of law, democratic accountability, equal treatment under law, and respect for private property. Governments should not force Canadians to choose between them.

Parliament should require complete transparency for rights-recognition agreements, explicit protections for existing private property, and meaningful consultation with provinces, municipalities, affected residents, and the public at large before future agreements are concluded. Property rights cannot depend on reassurances delivered after an agreement is signed.

Remove the state from counselling rooms

Call to action: *Repeal the Criminal Code prohibition on counselling choices*

While protecting people from coercion and abuse, the state must also respect the personal psychological choices that adults make about their own sexuality. If there is no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation, then the state has no place in the psychologist's office or the pastor's study.

Bill C-4, in [force](#) since January 2022, added *Criminal Code* offences for “conversion therapy.” The law [targets](#) any “practice, treatment or service” meant to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, or to reduce attraction to the same sex, or to reduce “gender expression” that does not match their sex. Providing such a service can result in a five-year jail term.

Bill C-4 criminalizes assisting a boy or man who seeks to align his gender identity with his biological sex. The law criminalizes assisting a girl or woman seeking to align her gender identity with her biological sex. The only legal gender transitions in Canada are away from sex-at-birth and towards the opposite sex. Assisting someone to “detransition” back to their biological sex is a crime in Canada, as is encouraging an adult or minor to accept the reality of the sex that she or he was born with. An adult's freedom to pursue a therapeutic objective in counselling therefore depends on having the “correct” goal.

The federal government itself acknowledged that Bill C-4 engages freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and liberty and security interests, [including](#) competent adults' freedom to make treatment choices. Yet the House of Commons passed the Bill through every legislative stage on December 1, 2021, by unanimous consent, and [without](#) ordinary committee scrutiny.

Not only are therapists subject to punishment under Bill C-4, but parents who seek counselling to help their gender-confused children also risk being accused of arranging a banned “practice, treatment or service.”

Criminal law should target coercion, abuse, and harm. It should not prescribe which personal outcomes an adult is allowed to pursue, or how parents help and protect their children from unscientific transgender ideology.

Stop expanding physician-assisted suicide

Call to action: *Narrow access to physician-assisted suicide and protect the right of Canadians to access suicide-free palliative care spaces*

In *Carter v. Canada (Attorney General)*, the Supreme Court of Canada [struck down](#) the *Criminal Code* prohibition against helping a person to commit suicide, ostensibly to benefit a small number of people who are close to death and suffering great pain. In 2017, 2,838 Canadians [died](#) through physician-assisted suicide (also known as Medical Assistance in Dying or “MAiD”). By 2024, that number had [risen](#) to 16,499 – 5.1 percent of all deaths. In 2021, Parliament [removed](#) the requirement that a person’s natural death be reasonably foreseeable; in 2024, 732 people received MAiD under that expanded “Track 2” framework. Unless Parliament acts soon, Canadians whose sole underlying condition is mental illness will [become](#) eligible for physician-assisted suicide in March 2027.

These statistics establish that Canada’s physician-assisted suicide regime is no longer confined to people approaching death.

No Canadian should feel that assisted suicide is easier to obtain than the palliative, disability, mental-health, or home care they need to continue living with dignity. Canada still has significant and uneven gaps in access to palliative care. Nor should governments erase spaces intentionally dedicated to life-affirming, end-of-life care. British Columbia [terminated](#) a \$1.5-million annual agreement with Delta Hospice Society after it refused to provide assisted suicide onsite, while a Catholic hospital is being sued over its policy of not providing assisted suicide, and instead helping patients to transfer to other facilities that do provide it.

Parliament should permanently exclude mental illness as a sole qualifying condition, strengthen safeguards for people whose deaths are not foreseeable, protect conscience- and faith-based institutions, and make high-quality palliative care genuinely accessible across the country, regardless of income, disability, diagnosis, or geography.

Restore medical autonomy and choice

Call to action: *Repeal the Canada Health Act to allow provinces to innovate, pioneer and test different healthcare policies, in keeping with the Constitution Act, 1867*

Medical autonomy means having the freedom to say “yes” to needed care.

Canadians are trapped in a healthcare system that promises universal access but in reality, fails to deliver timely care. In 2025, the median [wait](#) from family-doctor referral to treatment reached 28.6 weeks. Neurosurgery wait times approached 50 weeks. The [estimated](#) value of working time lost while patients waited for treatment exceeded \$4.2 billion.

Long waits can mean worsening illness, prolonged pain, lost opportunities for treatment, and premature death. In *Chaoulli v. Quebec*, six of seven Supreme Court Justices [recognized](#) that serious delays in receiving public healthcare engage the right to life and security of the person – protected by section 7 of the *Charter*.

Canada’s founders gave the provinces exclusive jurisdiction over healthcare (section 92 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*), leaving the federal government with jurisdiction only over marine hospitals. Provinces are supposed to be learning from each other’s successes and failures, by way of each province pursuing its own healthcare policies. But the *Canada Health Act* constrains the provinces in an area that falls under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. The Act [ties](#) federal funding to conditions that stop provinces from trying the mix of public and private delivery, a system that already works for patients in countries such as Japan and Switzerland.

Abolishing this Act would allow provinces to rightfully introduce more choice for Canadians. Canadians should not have to leave the country, or be wealthy enough to pay out of pocket, simply to escape an intolerable queue.

Repeal the *Online Streaming Act*

Call to action: *Repeal the Online Streaming Act*

The internet does not need a federal broadcasting regulator.

[Bill C-11](#), the *Online Streaming Act*, became law in April 2023. It put Netflix, Disney+, Spotify, and other large streamers under the CRTC. Ottawa insisted there was a user exemption. The statute says a person who uploads a video or podcast is not carrying on a broadcasting undertaking. But the next section lets the CRTC decide that a “program” itself is still subject to the Act, which includes content that generates revenue. In effect, Canadians who upload content to streaming services may find that the content itself is treated as broadcasting, even though they are not licensed as broadcasters. The CRTC can write those rules after the fact, using revenue as one of the tests.

While the CRTC cannot require a platform to use a particular algorithm, it can impose [conditions](#) concerning the “showcasing and discoverability” of programming that the CRTC defines as “Canadian.” That power applies to regulated streaming and online broadcasting services such as Netflix, Disney+, and Spotify, not to ordinary internet search. In practice, the CRTC can still influence what those services are expected to promote, and therefore what Canadians are most likely to discover and consume. How the CRTC exercises this authority is not “value neutral.”

In 2026, the CRTC established a discoverability framework requiring streaming services to prominently present and promote Canadian and Indigenous programming, establish measurable commitments, monitor results, and report back to the regulator. The CRTC has also [required](#) some large streaming services to devote five percent of their Canadian revenues to designated broadcasting funds.

Section 2(b) of the *Charter* protects freedom of expression, including the freedom to receive information and ideas. In a free society, why should any government decide what its citizens consume or what counts as its “authentic culture”?

Canadian culture is both robust and multi-faceted. It does not need bureaucratic protection from super-regulators. What Canadians watch, hear, and discover should be determined by Canadians themselves, free from manipulation or interference from Ottawa.

Repeal the *Online News Act*

Call to action: *Repeal the Online News Act*

The federal government said Bill C-18, the *Online News Act*, would strengthen Canadian journalism by [forcing](#) large platforms to bargain with, and pay, Canadian news businesses when those platforms make news available. Instead, it made news harder to access and deepened the industry's dependence on government funding.

The *Online News Act* was built on the premise that digital platforms unfairly benefited from linking to Canadian news and should be compelled to compensate publishers. But hyperlinks are not stolen content. They are the basic architecture of the open internet, directing readers to sources.

Meta responded by removing news from Facebook and Instagram in Canada. Google threatened to exit Canada before Ottawa rewrote the regulatory framework and accepted a \$100-million annual contribution, now distributed through the Canadian Journalism Collective. As of 2026, Google Search is the [only](#) digital news intermediary subject to the *Act*, and it operates under a five-year exemption from mandatory bargaining.

The result bears little resemblance to the competitive marketplace that Parliament promised.

This matters for freedom of expression. Government should not design the financial architecture of a free and independent press. A healthy democracy depends on news organizations that compete for readers, subscribers and advertisers.

Canada's news industry faces economic disruption. Parliament cannot reverse technological change by making the circulation of information costly or by tying journalism more closely to government policy.

Parliament should repeal the *Online News Act* and remove the CRTC from the news marketplace. Any support for journalism should be transparent, limited, viewpoint-neutral, and structured to preserve independence. Government should protect a free press, not manage its business model.

Clearly define AI regulations

Call to action: Do not give a Digital Safety Commission vast powers to regulate Artificial Intelligence chatbot services

On June 10, 2026, the federal government introduced [Bill C-34](#), the *Safe Social Media Act*, which includes vast AI regulations. The goal of preventing AI chatbot services from causing harm is understandable. Bill C-34 prohibits chatbots from encouraging self-harm, harm to others, and suicide, and from establishing emotional dependency in users. It requires services to interrupt conversations when users express suicidal thoughts or intent to harm others, and to direct them to crisis services.

But it also imposes a “duty to act responsibly” that forces companies to take “adequate” measures against vaguely defined “harmful behaviours,” including “any other type of behaviour specified in the regulations.” These regulations do not yet exist. What a future regulator determines to be “any other type” of harmful chatbot output may have profound implications for Canadians’ access to information.

Increasingly, Canadians use AI chatbots not merely for conversation but for research, education, and discovery. AI chatbots and search tools have become a mainstream method for accessing information. The more Canadians rely on AI systems to locate information, conduct research, and explore ideas, the more consequential government authority over chatbot outputs becomes. Bill C-34, therefore, forces Canadians to simply “trust the government.” It empowers a future Commission to regulate an increasingly important gateway to information without placing clear limits on that Commission’s authority.

Faced with severe penalties and unclear obligations, AI companies will have powerful incentives to retain more, monitor more, disclose more, and implement increasingly cautious generative models. Alternatively, they may simply exit the Canadian market.

If Bill C-34 passes in its current form, the rational response for Canadians will be to assume their AI conversations are being monitored by AI companies or by police. The rational response for AI companies will be to err on the side of caution at the expense of Canadians’ autonomy, freedom of expression, access to information, and privacy.

Reject a central bank digital currency

Call to action: *Guarantee continued access to cash of any amount for legal transactions*

Parliament should take steps to ensure that Canadians never lose the freedom that cash provides.

A central bank digital currency (CBDC) would be a new, paperless form of Canadian currency issued directly by the Bank of Canada in digital form. It would fully replace cash, and become the only way for Canadians to buy and sell. A CBDC would be a direct digital liability of the central bank – essentially a digital counterpart to physical cash.

Digital (electronic) currency would not provide the privacy and independence that cash provides. Cash can be exchanged directly between two people without creating a centralized record of the transaction. In contrast, a CBDC would operate through digital infrastructure and make transactions significantly more traceable. It could also be technologically capable of incorporating conditions or restrictions on payments. For example, a CBDC could be written so a payment will not go through for fuel above a monthly cap, or for a legitimate donation the government dislikes.

Those features allow the government to switch off money. China has already used a national digital ID and social-credit scoring to block millions from buying plane and train tickets. Canada's own peaceful Freedom Convoy protest showed how quickly accounts can be frozen. That makes the design of any future CBDC a question not merely of payment convenience, but of privacy, personal autonomy, and the proper limits of government power.

Despite widespread public opposition to a central bank digital currency, the Bank of Canada continues to research a digital currency for Canada. In a 2023 Bank of Canada poll, 92 percent of 89,423 respondents [preferred](#) traditional payment methods over a digital currency; 82 percent strongly opposed the bank even researching a digital dollar. And yet, research continues.

Further, Bill C-2, the *Strong Borders Act*, is still before Parliament. Bill C-2 would [criminalize](#) cash transactions of \$10,000 or more, ensuring that all large cash transactions are digitally traceable. Cash is an instrument of personal freedom. Canadians should remain free to use cash for lawful purposes without government interference.

Safeguard privacy rights

Call to action: *Strengthen Canada's privacy laws to make privacy the default and protect Canadians from government surveillance*

Privacy is the foundation of freedom of thought, freedom of expression, personal autonomy, and human dignity. When Canadians know, or have strong grounds to believe, that they are being monitored, they behave differently, speak differently, and think differently. Yet federal legislation increasingly expands government access to Canadians' personal information and lowers the standards required to obtain sensitive data.

Canada's foundational privacy laws must be strengthened to restore privacy as the default state in Canada.

The *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* ([PIPEDA](#)), which governs private-sector data practices, should be improved by requiring meaningful consent, by strengthening data deletion requirements, and by prohibiting corporations from voluntarily disclosing Canadians' data to government institutions except in genuine emergencies or under judicial authorization.

The recently [introduced](#) *Protecting Privacy and Consumer Data Act* ([PPCDA](#)), which essentially replaces PIPEDA, includes important improvements, including recognition of privacy as a fundamental right. However, serious weaknesses remain. Oversight should remain with an independent Privacy Commissioner rather than with a Cabinet-appointed commission, and key privacy standards should not be left to future regulations.

The [Privacy Act](#), which regulates government data practices, also needs significant improvements. It should require stronger safeguards for information-sharing between government agencies, narrow government data collection to what is strictly necessary, strengthen deletion rules, require notification when personal information is disclosed, and mandate stronger Privacy Impact Assessments.

Finally, where federal statutes conflict, the law providing greater protection for personal privacy should prevail.

These reforms would help restore the privacy protections under the *Charter* that allow Canadians to live freely, speak openly, and participate in democracy without fear of government surveillance.

Reject a national digital ID for Canadians

Call to action: *Ensure that digital identification remains entirely voluntary, and prohibit its use for government surveillance*

Privacy is not valuable merely because people sometimes have something to hide. It protects security, autonomy and human dignity. Systems that connect identity to services, transactions, and personal data can create profound power imbalances between citizens and the state, particularly when participation becomes practically unavoidable.

Why, then, is Ottawa rapidly building the infrastructure for digital identity in Canada?

In August 2026, the Canadian Digital Service [announced](#) the launch of CanadaLogin, intended to replace dozens of federal sign-in systems with one common gateway. Ottawa has also launched GC Issue and Verify, a platform that allows federal departments to issue and verify digital credentials. Earlier pilots tested a GC Wallet with digital aviation licences and temporary resident visas.

The government insists that these tools are optional, that physical credentials will remain available, and that it is not creating a national digital ID. But Ottawa is simultaneously developing what it calls Digital Public Infrastructure: interconnected systems for digital credentials, data exchange and payments that are intended to work across governments and, potentially, beyond government.

Digital identification is not inherently objectionable. A digital version of a passport, permit or licence can be convenient and may even protect privacy when it reveals only the information necessary for a transaction. The danger begins when identification becomes an infrastructure for tracking, profiling, or controlling access.

Parliament should establish firm limits before this infrastructure expands further. Digital credentials must remain genuinely voluntary; Canadians must retain non-digital alternatives; data collection should be strictly minimized; and government should be prohibited from using digital identity systems to track behaviour, build profiles, or condition access to lawful services.

About the Justice Centre

Founded in 2010, the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms is a registered Canadian charity dedicated to defending the constitutional rights and freedoms of all Canadians through litigation and education. The Justice Centre funds a team of experienced constitutional lawyers who represent individuals and organizations whose fundamental rights and freedoms have been violated by government action. These cases can shape the law for years to come.

Our work focuses on the rights and freedoms protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, including freedom of expression, conscience and religion, peaceful assembly and association, as well as privacy, liberty, equality and democratic rights.

The Justice Centre works to help Canadians understand their constitutional freedoms and the principles that sustain a free society. We publish policy reports, produce educational programs and resources, offer online courses, and communicate important constitutional developments to Canadians across the country.

The Justice Centre relies entirely on voluntary donations and does not accept government funding, allowing us to remain independent in challenging governments and public institutions when they exceed their lawful authority or violate the rights and freedoms of Canadians.

Our Charitable Registration Number is 817174865RR0001.