



The inFormer



The Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians

Editorial: David Warner (Chair), Lily Oddie Munro, Joe Spina and Alexa Huffman



Lily Oddie Munro attends the 42nd Annual Meeting of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress, held in Washington, D.C, on July 10, 2012.

Notice

We are currently exploring the possibility of providing office space for former Members, Tuesdays and Thursdays between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m.

Distinguished Service Award

Your association proudly presented a Distinguished Service Award to the Hon. Bill Davis on June 6, 2010. We await your nominations for someone who deserves to be honoured for their contributions to parliamentary democracy and beyond.

Criteria

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes exceptional career contributions and/or achievements by former Members of the Ontario Legislature. The recipient is not currently elected to the Senate Assembly or the House of Commons and has demonstrated remarkable community contributions since leaving elected political life.

Send nominations to 1612 @C 99 Wellesley St. W., Toronto, Ont. M7A 1A2, before March 31.

Explain in less than 500 words why this former Member should receive the Award and provide a brief biography.

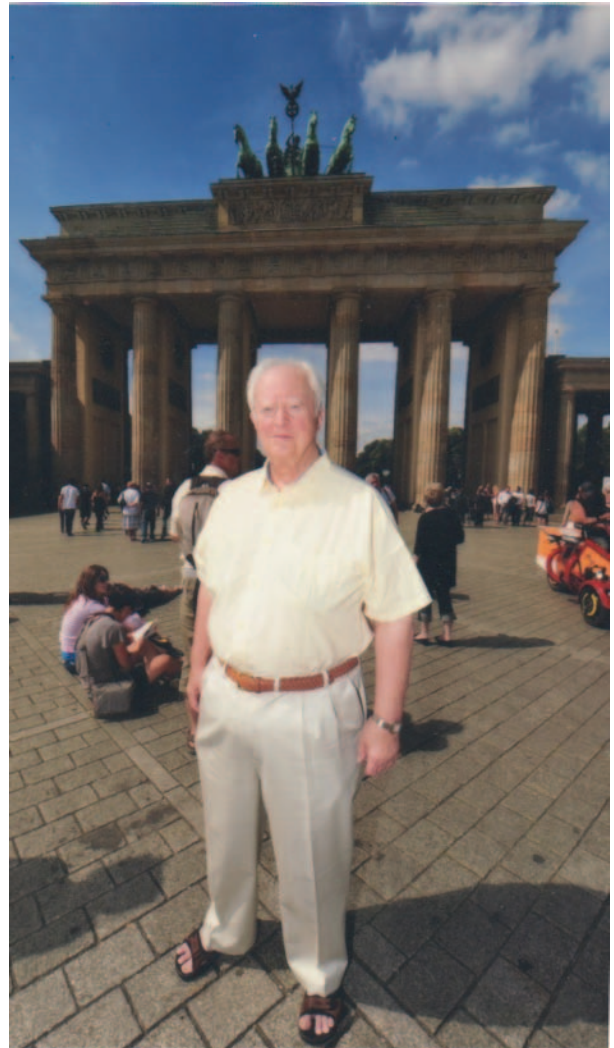
A Note from the Chairman

As you read this edition several months have passed and your board finds itself heavily involved in new projects on behalf of our membership.

Hopefully you were able to attend the June AGM. In addition to the business session we were delighted to be hosted by the Lieutenant Governor in the Vice-Regal Suite for a pre-AGM dinner reception. On behalf of our membership I was honoured to convey to His Honour our deepest respect and loyalty to Her Majesty celebrating her Diamond Jubilee. Our AGM dinner was extremely well attended and the Hon Roy McMurtry presented a stimulating post-dinner address that generated considerable conversation. We were also delighted to welcome distinguished guests to our dinner including the Speaker, a representative from the American Consul General and representatives from the Quebec and Manitoba and Canadian Associations. Greetings were also received from the European Former Members Association and the USAFMC. It's hard to remember that it was our 12th AGM and great effort is already directed to our next AGM scheduled for 5 June, 2013.

Because I was in Canterbury in October I delegated our Vice-Chairman, Gilles Morin, to represent OAFP at the annual joint meeting of Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba. His report will be provided in our next newsletter. Lily Munro represented us at the USAFMC meeting and her report makes for interesting reading. Membership continues to grow but if you are aware of any former member not yet 'signed up' please let us know. We continue to monitor retiree benefits and changes if any and to connect members with the appropriate staff where specific issues need action. At the same time we value your input concerning future regional meetings, interest in committee membership and assistance with our 'Where Are They Now' column. And you are invited to make nomination for suitable candidates to receive our Distinguished Service Award. Next month I hope you will attend our Soiree to be held in the Whitney Block on Tuesday, 27 November, 4-7pm. It is always well attended by our members and any number of distinguished visitors. There is no charge for this event and members are welcome to bring a guest. I hope your summer went well and that we will have an opportunity to meet in person at our 27 November Soiree. Sincerely

Rev Canon Derwyn Shea
Chair



Chairman Derwyn Shea outside the
Brandenburg Gate in Berlin in Aug. 2012.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Robert Nixon

(An update from email to Lily Oddie Munro from St George, On. September 2, 2012.)

Dear Lily,

I was delighted to hear from you in your capacity as a member of the board of OAFP and to know that you are active in the organization. In my case, I have problems with my sight (Glaucoma), and can't drive, so Dorothy and I stick close to home. We are both 84, fortunately feel well and have family members close by. We are living in the hired man's cottage at the farm at St George with daughter Jane and her husband next door. You remember the election of 1990 which was a disaster for the Liberals: we lost the government to the NDP, Premier Peterson was personally defeated and many friends were sent home. Although most caucus members advised against the early election I was in favour, so I must carry my share of the blame. Anyway, ancient history! We survivors returned to the legislature as Opposition and I was selected as interim leader. The debates of the first session with Bob Rae as premier make interesting reading. One day as the House was gathering for 2 PM prayers, the Premier sauntered over to my desk and offered me the job of Ontario's Agent General in London, England. After talking to Dorothy, I jumped at the chance, made a farewell speech in the leg and we took off for UK.

Ontario owned a flat near the offices which we moved into. I could easily walk to work and soon felt comfortable with the 27 staff members serving the business and other needs of the province in UK. Dorothy and I enjoyed the experience and made many new friends. Unfortunately she developed lymphoma and entered several years of chemotherapy, radiation and surgery which meant that she returned to Ontario for treatment several

times. At present she is free of all symptoms and enjoying good health.

Serious economic downturn was experienced world wide in the early '90s. It was severe in Canada, and Ontario decided to close the London office so our experience drew to a close after two years.

About that time the Liberal Party won the federal election and Jean Chretien became PM. The outgoing government had decided on a plan to renovate Toronto International Airport (now Pearson) at large expense. The incoming PM asked me to review the plan and recommend appropriate action. After a quick review and consulting experts, I recommended replacing the plan with a new one which was done.

The new government then appointed me chair of Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd. then a successful international leader in the nuclear power industry. I chaired a board composed of capable citizens from across the country, many, like me with political experience. We were well advised by the President and officials as well as the nuclear scientists who were/are considered among the world's best. After about five years I resigned in order to travel and enjoy retirement with Dorothy, our family (now with six grandchildren) and the family farm.

Since then there has been lots of lawn mowing, travel to Europe, India, local activity, petting Missy the dog. and watching the world go by.



42nd Annual Meeting – The United States Association of Former Members of Congress – July 10, 2012 – Washington D.C. - OAFP Participation (Photo on Page 1)

Canon Derwyn Shea, Chairman of OAFP, received an invitation from Peter M. Weichlen, Executive Director, USAFMC, for representation at their 42ND Annual Meeting. Lily Oddie Munro accepted the invitation to attend. Other attendees included the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians, and the European International Association of Former Parliamentarians, a tradition which continues with the partner host countries. On the evening of July 9th, the Canadian and International guests were invited to a welcoming dinner, hosted by Peter Weichlen, and USAFMC representatives.

The agenda for the 42nd Annual Meeting held on July 10th, included a Coffee Reception at The Speaker's Room, U.S. Capitol Building, and a welcome by incoming Association President Connie Morella in the Chamber of the House of Representatives where a presentation of the 42nd Distinguished Service Award was made to The Hon. Gabriella Giffords. This was followed by the presentation of the 42nd Annual Report to Congress.

A media Q&A session discussing today's political climate, was held at the Capitol Visitors Center, followed by luncheon at George Washington University, and a presentation by the Director of the Graduate School of Political Management.

An interactive keynote conference on "The Future Job Market: How America Can Remain Competitive in a Global Economy" took place during the afternoon, Chaired by Sen. Larry Pressler and the Hon. Bob Clement, and featuring keynote speakers from the Information Technology Industry Council, and the National Labour College, and discussion leaders from the American Association of Community Colleges, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

The goal of the conference was to bring together former Members of Congress, issue experts and university students to discuss the future of American jobs, and the roles of education, immigration, and legislation in ensuring a globally competitive workforce. Participants were assigned to representative working groups, who discussed issues including: immigration and outsourcing; the role of the community college system, workforce education and job training; potential legislation and efforts at the state and federal levels; and America's current economic health and possible future economic trajectories. The conference concluded with short reports from each group.

The conference was followed by document viewing and dinner hosted by the National Archives. In the evening a panel presentation took place at the McGowan Theater, National Archives, addressing the topic of: "America Works: The Past, Present, and Future of Job Creation and Employment in America". American history was used as a medium to explore the future of the evolving jobs market, in which the panelists compared and contrasted current challenges to past events (e.g. the Great Depression, the advent of Reganomics, and past recessions), and bringing to a thoughtful conclusion the interwoven topics and events of the day.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



The 12th Annual General Meeting held on June 6, 2012 was a great success. The highlights of the day included the new board electing its officers and directors, a reception hosted by Ontario's Lieutenant Governor the Hon David Onley and our dinner in the legislative dining room with guest speaker The Hon. Roy McMurtry.



Above: The Hon. David Onley speaks to OAFP

Below: Roy McMurtry shares his experiences with our Chairman during the AGM dinner

McMurtry's speech was very enlightening. He spoke about his political career including being elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in the 1975 provincial election becoming Attorney-General until 1985. He mentioned his work from improved race relations and also his experience of running for Progressive Conservative Leader.

McMurtry noted he had a "great deal of fun" working in Ontario politics and how, when he was in office, there was a degree of collegiality and cooperation. He said partisanship has taken over and hard work must be done.

He did end the speech on a great note saying his experience in Queen's Park made it clear it was a great decision to pursue a political life. There were always challenges but he was very fortunate to be elected.



Board of Directors

Rev Canon Derwyn S. Shea
(Chair),

dshea@sthildastowers.com

Gilles Morin(Vice Chair)

igmorin@rogers.com

Terence Young(Vice Chair)

terence.young@parl.gc.ca

Karen Haslam(Secretary)

karenhaslam@sympatico.ca

Murad Velshi(Treasurer)

murad@velshi.com

John Hastings(Director)

john_hstngs@yahoo.ca

John Parker(Director)

johnparker@sympatico.ca

Steve Gilchrist(Director)

gilchris@hotmail.com

Lily Oddie Munro(Director)

oddie@sympatico.ca

David Warner(Director)

david.warner@sympatico.ca

CIVILITY

BY JIM COYLE

One of the more disheartening insights I received into the state of contemporary parliamentary life in Ontario arose, oddly enough, during one of the Legislature's finer efforts of recent times.

During the 39th Parliament, a select committee was struck to investigate mental health and addiction services in Ontario. In August 2010, after hearing heart-scalding stories from families around the province about the difficulty of getting treatment for loved ones, the committee submitted a widely-applauded report.

Most, if not all, committee members said the experience of working effectively with those of other parties was a highlight of their careers. All the more so, you might say, because of their low expectations of one another.

One MPP from the governing Liberals had reeled out of hearings one day, drained from what she'd heard, and needing nothing so much, she'd later recall, as a stiff gin and tonic.

In the hotel lobby, she spotted a Progressive Conservative colleague. An invitation was made. Drinks were shared. So was conversation. Other MPPs joined the pair. And the group discovered they had lots in common, as well as this particular common cause.

Later, the Liberal said it was her first serious conversation with a Tory. They'd been taught in candidate school, she said, that the opposition were pretty much Great Satans to be avoided at all costs.

Such a partisan outlook is probably not the wish of voters who elect Parliaments.

Deep down, it's probably not the wish of most MPPs.

"I had tremendous expectations for my first week as an elected Member of the Provincial Parliament" began one opinion piece by an MPP published by the Toronto Star in 2005.

It happened to have been written by former PC Leader John Tory. But it might have been written by most anyone ever to walk awestruck into the Pink Palace's legislative chamber and claim one of the precious seats therein.

The place is too frequently disillusionment's motherlode.

"There is talent on all sides of the House, in all parties," John Tory wrote. "And given the big challenges facing Ontario, we need to find a better way of putting that talent to work."

It's safe to suggest that, seven years on, such a better way has yet to be found.

If politicians share anything with the media sorts who cover them, it is that many become disillusioned idealists. C disheartened to the point of cynicism that the system does not run as they once imagined it did; that it is not a ringing but respectful clash of ideas in sorting out how we are all to get along.

What exists instead is theatre, posturing, stonewalling and, too often, personal attacks of egregious savagery.

The causes of this unfortunate turn are several.

In Ontario, watersheds probably occurred with the election of what were perceived to be unusually partisan governments in 1990 with the NDP, and in 1995 with the Common Sense Revolution of Mike Harris.

Through the '90s, the social interaction among members of different stripes that had previously been the norm declined. Caucuses withdrew into themselves. Mistrust of the "other" and the media (not without cause) increased.

Another factor is that over the years, under governments of every stripe, real power continued its inexorable march away from Parliament, into the hands of the first minister and a cadre of unelected advisers.

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CIVILITY (CON'T FROM PAGE 8)

The inevitable realization by MPPs, in majority governments anyway, of how little power and influence they truly wielded led either to frustration or the sort of wilfully disruptive antics that debased the currency of parliamentary life even if it won short-term attention.

The series of majority governments elected up until 2011 also produced an unbecoming impatience for scrutiny or delay. Vast omnibus bills that were, almost by definition, an abuse of Parliament's responsibility to scrutinize became a common tool for the administrative convenience of governments, while the limiting of debate became routine.

The news media have also been complicit in discrediting themselves along with the system and the politicians that are so frequently demeaned and lampooned.

Concentration of media ownership, tough economic times and new technologies have combined to mean that fewer agencies cover the legislature full time, that those doing so work with shrunken staffs, who must feed several news platforms ever quicker and shorter reports on an ever more complicated world.

In such a climate, conflict and vitriol, cheesy blame or simplistic demand are far easier to deal with

than collaboration, analysis, due process or debate.

The decline in civility that's occurred steadily over the last two decades in the legislature has contributed greatly to public disgust with the system - and to the disdain in which, especially by the young, parliament and politicians (and the news media) are held.

The Samara organization in Ottawa has produced valuable research into how those who have served as MPs said they felt like "potted plants" with little say on their parties' positions and, sometimes, little knowledge about what they are voting on in the pantomime of democracy.

Canadians surely sense this is part of the reason they're tuning out politics and, in alarming numbers, declining even to vote.

The dislike of politics, Samara said in one report, "seemed closely related to their perception of a gap between what politics is and what democracy should be." To those surveyed, politics had become a game played by insiders, a realm where tactics are all, where ordinary citizens have little voice.

It's not just Canada or Ontario. A recent report by Democratic Audit in the U.K. said corporate power and unrepresentative politicians had left British democracy in "terminal decline."

That's a starkly serious alarm and, if it is not too naïve to hope, a clarion call to action.

It should be a catalyst for reforms aimed at producing a parliamentary system that truly reflects and gives expression to the population it represents.

My late Star colleague James Travers, in his national affairs column, made democratic reform his central recurring theme.

He did so, he once told friends, because the single biggest lesson he learned during his years as a foreign correspondent was how thin the veneer of civilization could be.

And how difficult it is to rebuild democratic institutions once they've crumbled and collapsed.

Jim Coyle is a columnist with the Toronto Star. He has over 30 years experience covering provincial politics. In 2010, he completed his fourth tour of the Queen's Park Press Gallery.

A DIRTY WORD IN TODAY'S POLITICS: COURTESY

By Steve Paikin

Those of us who watch politics for a living --- and because we just happen to like it --- understand that courtesy is a ridiculous, antiquated notion on today's political landscape.

The political world usually mirrors the broader society it purports to represent. How often do we see younger people giving up their seats to older folks on buses or subways? How often do we see (again, unfortunately almost always) younger people driving with their car windows open, their radios blaring the latest infernal hip hop or acid rock music for everyone within ten city blocks to hear?

Or how often do we hear people using their cell phones and talking in loud voices in places where silence is prized, such as on the train, in the library, or in a movie theatre?

The sad truth is, we live in discourteous times. Courtesy to those with whom we share our surroundings seems not to be a value enough of us prize in today's world.

So can we really be surprised that those who occupy our political sphere --- given that they are plucked from among us --- are remarkably lacking in courtesy as well? Add to that the hyper-partisan, hyper-competitive atmosphere, the elevated levels of accountability we demand from our

politicians, and a media/blogosphere all too happy to report on any statement, the more outrageous the better, and you have all the ingredients you need for incivility of epic proportions.

Six years ago, I wrote a book about former Ontario Premier John P. Robarts. Besides having, by all accounts, a wonderful premiership, I was struck by the things his political adversaries of the day had to say about him.

Former NDP leader Donald C. MacDonald told me he and Robarts could disagree without being disagreeable, that Robarts dramatically increased the research budgets for the opposition parties because he understood the important role an effective opposition played in our parliamentary democracy. He was not petty or small-minded.

Former Liberal leader Robert Nixon said Robarts instructed the public service to answer the questions of all MPPs, including opposition ones because after all, "We were *all* elected to Queen's Park to do a job, not just the government members."

Can anyone imagine that spirit of generosity or courtesy existing today?

This issue of courtesy in public life arose again for me in the middle of July, 2012. The former head of the beleaguered air ambulance service provider, Ornge's Chris Mazza, testified before a legislative committee at Queen's Park in a veritable media circus.

What fascinated me were the differing approaches taken to questioning Dr. Mazza. Frank Klees (PC - Newmarket-Aurora) took a "let's go for the jugular" approach. It was not what you'd call courteous. He clearly was less interested in Mazza's answers, and more interested in making a show of indignation for the cameras. I'm not saying his views weren't sincerely held, but Klees was obviously not on a fact-finding mission. His goal seemed to be to humiliate Mazza as much as possible, and he even went so far at one point as to refuse to call Mazza "Doctor," saying he wasn't worthy of the honorific.

Liz Sandals (Lib - Guelph) was almost as bad. She spent much of her time excoriating Mazza, then at the end of a laundry list of criticisms, asked him whether he felt he needed to apologize to the people of Ontario. Again, if the idea was actually to get information out of the witness, it failed miserably. Mazza clammed up, said nothing new, and merely mumbled that he always tried his best. Quite the penetrating glimpse into the obvious.

But two New Democratic members of the committee tried a different approach. They tried courtesy. And it worked brilliantly.

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A DIRTY WORD IN TODAY'S POLITICS: COURTESY (con't from Page 6)

France Gelinas (NDP – Sudbury) and Jagmeet Singh (NDP – Bramalea-Gore-Malton) both asked open-ended, non-aggressive, fact-based questions and seemed to get the most candid, heartfelt replies out of Mazza. Rather than preening for the cameras as so many other members did, Gelinas and Singh looked as if they were on a genuine mission to learn more, to find out new information, and did so in the finest tradition of parliamentary courtesy.

Dr. Mazza may be a thoroughly disreputable character. He may have done some very bad things as head of Ornge. But I know enough about asking questions to know that when you put a broken man in the hot seat in front of more than a dozen politicians and a roomful of media types, you only increase sympathy for him if you overdo the cross-examination.

I have no idea what the politicians who watched those hearings thought of most of the behavior of most of the MPPs. But I do know that both Gelinas and Singh already have solid reputations for doing good work, and Singh has only had the job for less than a year. But by taking the rare and courteous approach to committee work on that day in July, they only enhanced those credentials.

Courtesy. What a concept. They should try it more often.

Steve Paikin is the anchor and senior editor of "The Agenda with Steve Paikin" on TVO. "The Agenda began its 7th season on TVO in September 2012."

EDITORIAL

By David Warner

Civility, once lost, is difficult to regain. Two experienced journalists who have been associated with Queen's Park for a considerable time have eloquently expressed their observations about how we conduct legislative business. It is not a pretty picture. The question is not how we got to this point, but how do we create a healthier atmosphere, one where Members respect each other. And, can find ways to collectively, cooperatively create public policy.

Your thoughts, observations and suggestions are welcomed. Write to us at the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians <OAFP@ontla.ola.org>.

*Obituaries***John Cleary**

CLEARY, John - Mr. John Cleary of Lunenburg, passed away peacefully at Hospice Cornwall with his family by his side on Saturday October 6, 2012 age 80 years. Loving husband of Elizabeth Cleary nee-Brischler. Cherished father of Sharon Leclair (Robert), Donna Desjardins (Charles), Debbie (Art Parsons) and John (Cindy). Sadly missed by five grandchildren Natalie, Chantal, John, Alex, Kristina and three great grandchildren Nicholas, Isabelle and Kayden. Predeceased by his parents Neil and Wilhelmenia Cleary (Forsyth) and one sister Helen Bentley (Allan). Survived by several nieces and nephews. Visitation will be held at the BROWNLEE FUNERAL HOME MacDougall Chapel 14815 County Road 2 Ingleside on Wednesday from 2-4pm and 7- 9pm. Mass of Christian burial wascelebrated in Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Church Ingleside on Thursday October 11, 2012 at 1:00PM. Rite of Committal to follow at St. Andrew's Parish Cemetery. As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations to Cornwall Hospice would be appreciated by the family. Online condolences may be made at www.brownleefuneralhomes.com

Contact Information

Chair:

Derwyn S. Shea
29 Grenadier Heights
Toronto, Ontario M6S 2W5
416.787.7911
dshea@sthildastowers.com

Vice Chair:

Gilles Morin
6426 Glen Knolls Drive
Orleans, Ontario K1C 2X2
jgmorin@rogers.com

Vice Chair:

Terence H. Young
2030 Merchants Gate, Ste. 100
Oakville, Ontario L6M 2Z8
905.842.5910
youngt.policyalliance@cogeco.ca

Treasurer:

Murad Velshi
42 Hoyle Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M4S 2X6
416.488.3024
murad@velshi.com

Secretary:

Karen Haslam
karenhaslam@sympatico.ca

Directors at Large:

John L. Parker
48 Cameron Crescent
Toronto, Ontario M4G 1Z8
johnparker@sympatico.ca

Steve Gilchrist
sgilchrist@yahoo.com

John Hastings
john_hstings@tdsb.ca

David Warner
david.warner@sympatico.ca

Lily Oddie Munro
oddie@sympatico.ca

A Festive Season

Social This invitation is only for those Members, current and former, who enjoy a good time! If that includes you, then head for Room 1612, Whitney Block, Tuesday, November 27, 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Our Education Committee is interested in knowing of any speaking engagements you have had in the schools, or with community groups. We are also looking for a few more volunteers. Please contact John Hastings [john_hastings@yahoo.ca or john.hastings@tdsb.on.ca] if you would like to share your parliamentary knowledge with our youth and others.

Regional meetings Your association is eager to respond to requests for regional meetings. Please let us know if you would be interested in attending and if so what would be the closest large centre for you.

Getting involved Your unique and important contributions to parliamentary democracy can be shared by serving on a committee of your association. Contact Steve Gilchrist [gilchris@hotmail.com 416-823-7654]

Renewal Form

I wish to join/renew full membership in the Ontario Association of Former
Parliamentarians, *OR*

☐

I am currently a sitting member of the Ontario Legislative Assembly and wish to
become an associate member.

☐

Name

Address

City

Province

Phone

E-mail

Riding

Years Represented

Party Designation

I would like to join/renew for:

1 year at \$50.00

☐

I would also like to contribute \$500.00 to become a Lifetime Cornerstone Member of OAFP

☐

Please send a cheque payable to the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians, Room 1612, Whitney
Block, 99 Wellesley St. West, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A2
Thank you so much for your participation and support!