



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# REPORT TO CANADIANS **2020**

Period of this report: April 1, 2019–March 31, 2020  
Parliamentary sessions covered in this period: 42nd Parliament  
(December 3, 2015–November 5, 2019) & 43rd Parliament  
(December 5, 2019–March 31, 2020)

Total number of sitting days during this period: 97

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The *Report to Canadians* presents highlights of the work undertaken by Members of Parliament and the efforts of the House of Commons Administration in supporting Members' daily activities. By opening a window into the workings of the House of Commons and increasing the public understanding of our parliamentary system, this report contributes to the transparent public governance expected by Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

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# Message from the Speaker

As Speaker of the House of Commons and head of the House of Commons Administration, I welcome the opportunity to present the 2019–2020 *Report to Canadians* to you. The report gives all Canadians a chance to learn about the important work of their Members of Parliament over the past year and that of the House Administration that supports them.

As fiscal year 2019–2020 comes to an end, we find ourselves living in unprecedented circumstances that no one could have anticipated just a few months ago. The coronavirus pandemic has altered the lives of Canadians as well as the business of the House of Commons, at least for the time being. It has changed how Members of Parliament meet, debate, and make decisions; and, as a result, Members' staff and the House Administration have had to adapt to contain the spread of the virus while continuing to support the work of Members and the business of democracy.

This included supporting the first meeting of a reduced House last March to adopt emergency legislation that would provide Canadians with a measure of COVID-19 relief. It also meant, for the first time ever, moving the proceedings of some standing committees entirely online. The pandemic continues to present an enormous challenge, but as the report shows, we are meeting that challenge, as well as the many others that have tested and shaped the House as we transitioned from the 42nd to the 43rd Parliament.

Of course, ushering in a new Parliament is never a small feat. I was honoured last December to be elected by the Members to serve as Speaker and, from this privileged vantage point, I have seen the work of the House Administration up close. To inaugurate the new Parliament, the Administration performed 338 swearing-in ceremonies; worked with Senate colleagues to adjust the Speech from the Throne ceremony to the reality of the two Chambers being in separate buildings; and established a comprehensive Members' Orientation Program to prepare new Members, assist departing ones, and support the entire 2019 Member cohort with ongoing, just-in-time information.

Throughout the year, we continued to make improvements: a Members' working group was established to ensure their interests were represented in the large-scale rehabilitation of Centre Block; access to petitions was improved to facilitate their use by citizens; digital upgrades and enhanced communication technologies (instant messaging, videoconferencing) were implemented to allow Members to communicate more easily with staff and constituents; and security enhancements were made to ensure the safety of Parliament Hill and all constituency offices. All of these initiatives were launched under the leadership of my distinguished predecessor, Geoff Regan, 36th Speaker of the House of Commons and Member of Parliament for Halifax West.

Learn more about the efforts of your Members of Parliament and of the House Administration in this year's report as well as about the activities, accomplishments and events that have left their mark over the course of the past 12 months.

I hope you find this report informative, and I thank you for your continued interest in the workings of your parliamentary democracy.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Hon. Anthony Rota, M.P.**

Speaker of the House of Commons



# Message from the Clerk

The Clerk of the House of Commons is responsible for the management of the House of Commons Administration. I am proud to lead a team of talented professionals, from procedural clerks and legal experts to finance and human resources specialists, digital technology wizards and tradespersons who, together, support the work of Members of Parliament by providing them with services tailored to their needs so that they can carry out their important parliamentary duties.

This past fiscal year ended as a period of uncertainty took hold. The pandemic and its social and economic impacts were being felt in Canadian homes and across many workplaces, including here at the House. While it is difficult to overstate the challenge, the unprecedented situation also presented our Administration with an opportunity to demonstrate our responsiveness, flexibility, and commitment—to the health and safety of Members, their staff, and our own employees, as well as to the collective mission, vision and values that guide all that the Administration does, as reflected in the *Strategic Plan 2019–2022*, launched in spring 2019.

The plan emphasizes the importance of the Administration's people and their ability to come together, across diverse services, as a united team to deliver outstanding services to Members and their staff, regardless of circumstance. In March of this year, our team—some working from their home offices, others respecting physical distancing on Parliament Hill—enabled several remarkable milestones, including the first online committee meeting and, a few weeks later, a more extensive meeting of the Special Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic that allowed hundreds of Members to participate virtually.

Equally notable was the innovative support to Members and their staff, many now working remotely, to ensure that newly developed health and safety protocols were observed. This was achieved in large measure by providing them with enhanced digital technologies and infrastructure that enabled them to remain connected with constituents. The need for physical distance may have been the catalyst for the change, but our ongoing commitment to adapt and adjust to meet the evolving needs of Parliament (especially for an institution as steeped in history and tradition as ours) helped make it possible. And the work continues.

This year we welcomed in the 43rd Parliament with a comprehensive Members' Orientation Program that introduced new Members and their staff to the ins and outs of the House of Commons. The enhanced program will provide ongoing support as Members and staff become more familiar with their parliamentary environment. We also improved the design and navigation of the internal website for Members; ensured that committee meeting rooms were webcast-ready; and, significantly, introduced a dedicated team of human resources advisors to support Members in their role as employers so that they could more keenly focus on their contribution to our democracy.

For the second year in a row, the House of Commons Administration was recognized as a Top 100 Employer in Canada, with complementary awards as a Top Employer for Young People and a Top Employer in the National Capital Region. As an institution, we have worked hard to attract and retain the right people to work in this extraordinary place and to deliver exceptional services that support Members and the democracy they serve. These awards are a testament to the success of our ambitions and efforts.

I hope this comes through as you read our *Report to Canadians* and learn more about the important work that Members of Parliament do on behalf of Canadians with the support of the House Administration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles Robert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Charles Robert**

Clerk of the House of Commons

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## Members' Snapshot



# A New Parliament

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This past year saw the dissolution of the 42nd Parliament on September 11, 2019, followed by a general election on October 21, 2019. A total of 338 newly elected and re-elected Members of Parliament gathered together for the first time on December 5, 2019, for the opening of the 43rd Parliament.

Depending on the results of a general election, the government formed may be a majority or minority government.

The term “majority government” refers to a situation in which the party that forms the government holds at least 170 of the 338 seats in the House of Commons. When the party that wins the most seats holds fewer than 170, we have a “minority government.” The governing party must then rely on the votes of other parties to have the majority of votes required to pass legislation and motions.

Most Members of Parliament belong to a political party and are members of a caucus. Each caucus meets weekly

when Parliament is in session to discuss policies and parliamentary strategy, as well as to establish their position on issues being debated in the House of Commons. Held in private, these meetings allow Members to freely express their views with their caucus colleagues as they develop their approach to the issues before Parliament.

A party must hold at least 12 seats to be recognized as an official party in the House. Recognition means that the party receives certain financial and procedural considerations.

## SEATS HELD BY EACH POLITICAL PARTY IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS (AS OF MARCH 31, 2020)

**157**

Liberal Party of Canada

**32**

Bloc Québécois

**3**

Green Party of Canada

**121**

Conservative Party of Canada

**24**

New Democratic Party

**1**

Independent Members



[Find out more about current Members of Parliament and party standings in the House of Commons](#)

[Learn more about the role of political parties in Parliament](#)

[View the list of party leaders and House Officers](#)



## **Walking in the footsteps of history**

Émilie Bourgoing became the youngest person and one of the first women to be appointed Assistant Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms this past year, assuming such distinguished duties as assisting the Sergeant-at-Arms in maintaining order and decorum in the House and walking in the daily Speaker's Parade.

# Constituencies

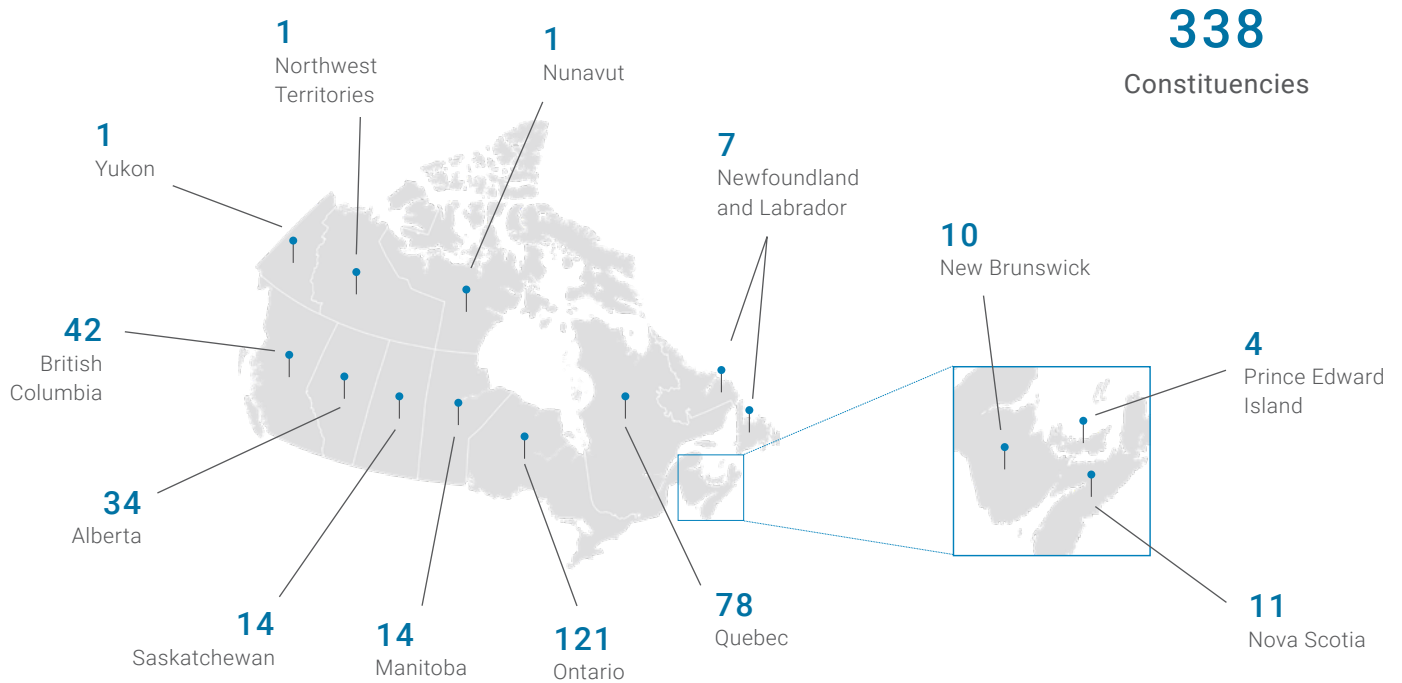


Every one of Canada's 338 constituencies (also called ridings or electoral districts) has a representative in the House of Commons. Each of these representatives—called Members of Parliament—maintains at least one office and employs staff in the constituency in order to interact with citizens and address issues of concern, attend important community events, and help their constituents access federal programs and services.



[Find the Member of Parliament for your riding](#)

[Look up the address for your Member's constituency office](#)



Members of Parliament and their teams handle thousands of inquiries every year from constituents seeking access to federal government programs and services, including:



Employment insurance



Disability pensions



Support for veterans



Passports and immigration

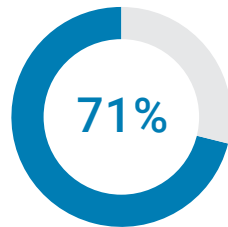


# About Members of Parliament

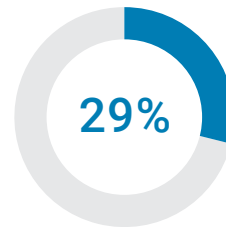
## Members of Parliament, by the numbers

For more than 150 years, Members of Parliament have upheld the principles and practices of democracy by representing the citizens who elect them. But the face of Parliament is always changing.

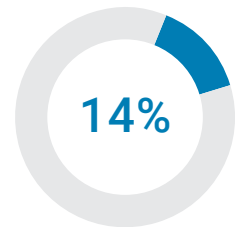
As at March 31, 2020



Seats held by men



Seats held by women



Seats held by Members born outside Canada

## Age of Members

As at March 31, 2020

**22**

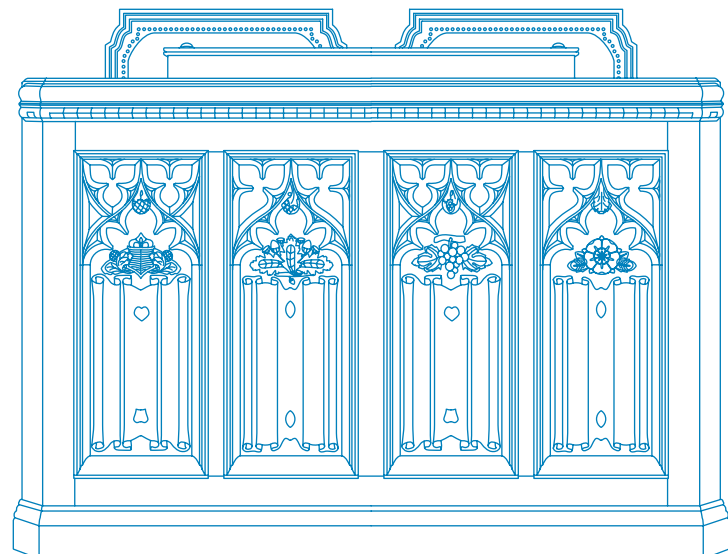
Age of the youngest Member

**52**

Average age of Members

**78**

Age of the oldest Member





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## Members' Activities



# In the Chamber

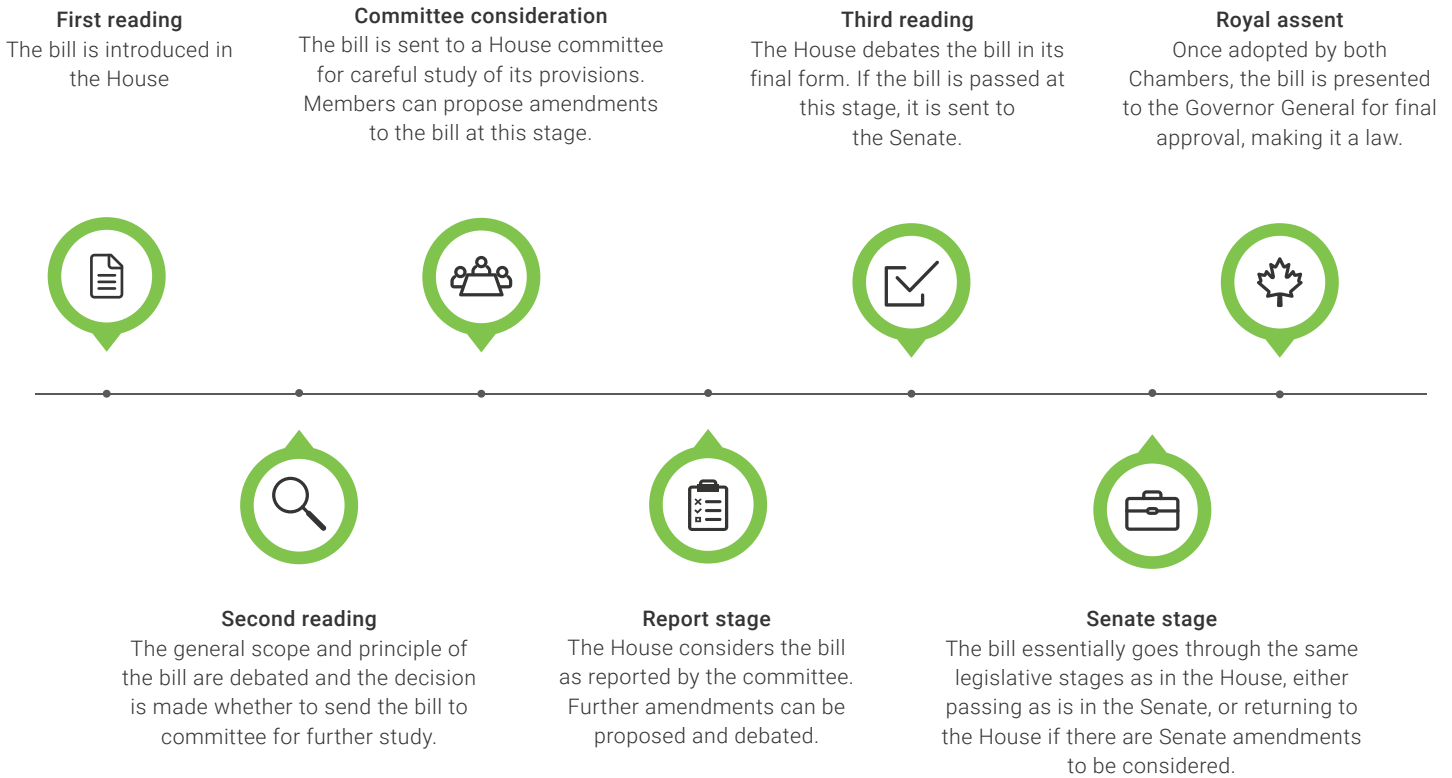
The Chamber is where Members come together to debate issues of national, regional and local importance, hold the government to account, vote on government funding requests, consider legislation, and represent electors. Presiding over all these activities is the Speaker of the House or one of the [other presiding officers](#).



[A typical week in the House](#)

## Consideration of bills

The House spends most of its time considering bills, which are legislative proposals. Most bills are introduced in the House either as government bills or private Member's bills. According to our bicameral parliamentary system, all bills must pass three reading stages in the House and the Senate, before they become law.



## Other work in the Chamber

In addition to reviewing and debating bills, Members' work in the Chamber includes:



**Scrutinizing public expenditures** – no public funds can be spent without prior approval by the House.



**Adopting resolutions** on issues of public interest.



Holding the government to account by means of **oral and written questions** and requests for information on government policies and activities.



Presenting **petitions** (either paper or electronic) on behalf of the public.

### ABOUT PETITIONS

The purpose of a petition is to draw attention to an issue of public interest or concern and to request that action be taken. Two forms of public petitions are accepted: paper petitions and electronic petitions. The government is required to respond to petitions within 45 days of their presentation in the House.

Since the opening of the 43rd Parliament, all petitions (whether paper or electronic) presented to the House are now available for consultation on the petitions website. Government responses to all petitions are made available on the website shortly after their electronic tabling in the House of Commons.

[Learn more about petitions](#)

[Learn more about enhancements to paper petitions](#)





## **The experience of a lifetime**

Forty students from across Canada beginning university studies in the National Capital Region were selected to work part-time at the House this past year under its prestigious Page Program, deepening their understanding of our parliamentary system.

The 2019–2020 page cohort included Yukon's Vincent Ménard, who helped support Members in the Chamber.



## Response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Chamber

Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, on March 13, 2020, the House adopted a motion by unanimous consent to adjourn until April 20, 2020. The motion provided for the adoption of two appropriation bills (Bill C-10 and Bill C-11) and a bill related to the temporary use of special warrants (Bill C-12). It also included provisions to manage the House's business within the context of this unanticipated adjournment, including the possibility of extending the adjournment with the agreement of the House Leaders of all four recognized parties.

The House was recalled on March 24 for the consideration of economic measures related to the pandemic. At the beginning of the sitting, Deputy Speaker Bruce Stanton informed Members of special measures that would be

taken, based on advice from public health authorities and as agreed by all parties. The House met for a few minutes and then suspended proceedings for several hours to allow for negotiations among the parties. When the sitting resumed, the House debated matters related to the COVID-19 pandemic and it considered and adopted Bill C-13, *An Act respecting certain measures in response to COVID-19*. It also adopted a motion providing for the unprecedented step of holding weekly meetings of the Standing Committee on Finance and the Standing Committee on Health by teleconference or videoconference to consider issues related to the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The House then adjourned until April 20, although it would also later be recalled on April 11.

# In Committees

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In committees, Members conduct in-depth studies. They consider and amend proposed legislation, examine government spending, conduct inquiries and receive input from experts and citizens.

**STANDING COMMITTEES** are established pursuant to the *Standing Orders of the House of Commons* and generally oversee a government department.

**STANDING JOINT COMMITTEES** are established pursuant to the *Standing Orders of the House of Commons* and the *Rules of the Senate* and are composed of members from both the Senate and the House of Commons.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES** are appointed by the House to carry out specific inquiries, studies or other tasks that the House judges to be of importance. Special committees exist until their final report has been presented to the House or until the end of the session.

On December 10, 2019, the House created the **Special Committee on Canada-China Relations** to review all aspects of the Canada-China relationship.

[List of standing and joint committees](#)

[Learn more about committees](#)

[Browse the list of committee meetings and watch or listen to all public meetings](#)



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## Virtual committee meetings at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada

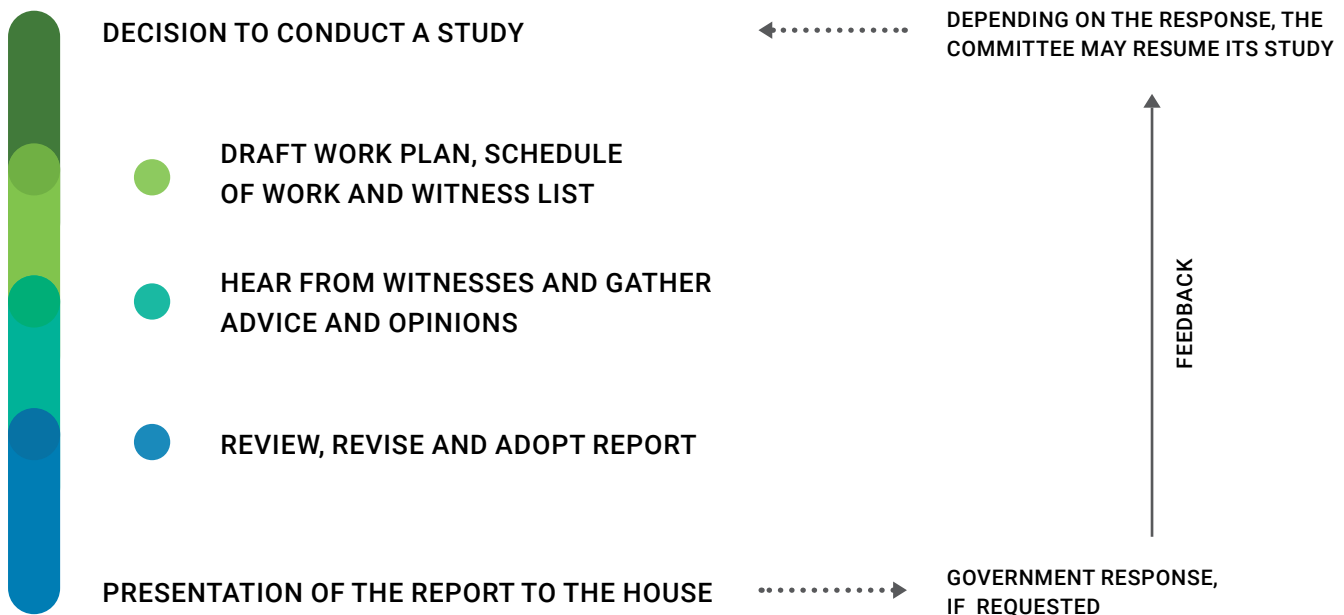
On March 31, the Standing Committee on Health held its first meeting pursuant to the motion adopted by the House. Connected by teleconference, the committee members were briefed on the response to the outbreak of the coronavirus, hearing from six witnesses. This was the first-ever official House committee meeting to occur exclusively by virtual means, with all members, witnesses and support staff participating by telephone. The audio of the meeting was streamed live on the House of Commons website. This meeting was closely followed by the first videoconference committee meeting, which took place on Thursday, April 9, when the Standing Committee on Health met.

## Committee reports

In their reports, committees often make recommendations to the House to influence government policy or help advance the debate on topics of interest to Canadians. They may ask the government to take action on specific issues or provide policy suggestions after hearing from witnesses, stakeholders and interested Canadians as part of their study.

### Usual order of business for committee study leading to a report

This chart shows the steps that a committee generally takes in examining an issue. Committees conduct studies by gathering information, holding meetings to hear from witnesses, accepting written submissions on the topic, summarizing the information received, and presenting recommendations to the House based on their conclusions.



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## Who are the witnesses?

Committees regularly invite citizens, experts, representatives of organizations, ministers and public servants to appear before them to obtain information (evidence) relevant to a study. These interactions allow witnesses to present their point of view. It is also possible to submit written briefs to a committee to share the perspectives of a group or an individual on the topic of the committee's study.



## What happens after reports are presented to the House?

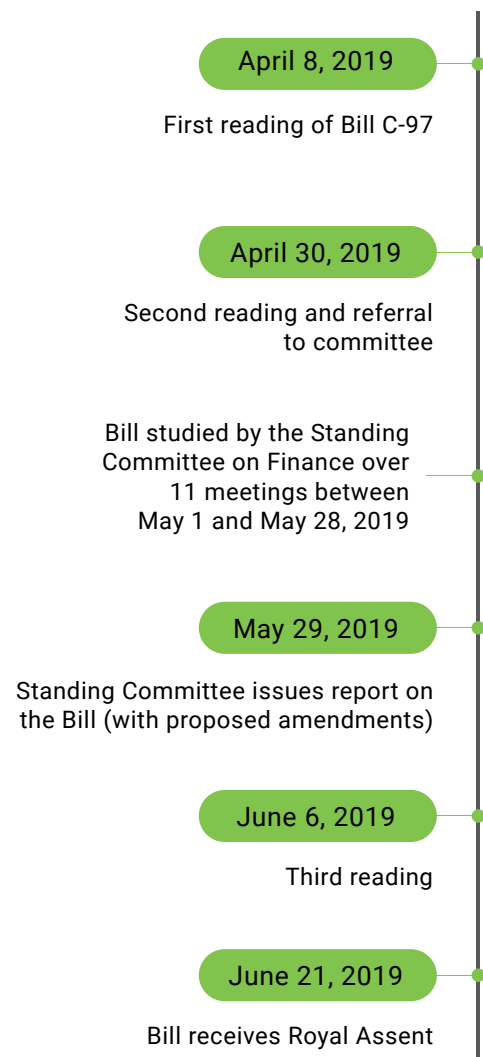
The following is a specific example of how the recommendations made in a committee report resulted in government action and, ultimately, a change in legislation:

On January 29, 2018, the House unanimously agreed that the Standing Committee on Finance be asked to review the *Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act*.

The committee studied this issue from February to November 2018, concluding with its 24th report, entitled "Confronting Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing: Moving Canada Forward," and containing 32 recommendations.

In the Budget 2019, the federal government said that this report provided "a roadmap to respond to current and future threats," and announced that it would implement several measures based on the committee's recommendations. It did so by introducing Bill C-97, which included proposed legislative language, in part 4, section 2, inspired by the finance committee's report.

Bill C-97 was in turn referred back to the Standing Committee on Finance Committee for further study and ultimately became law on June 21, 2019. While it can sometimes take time for committees to hear from all interested parties and make recommendations to the House, their work can influence public discourse and government policy, and lead to legislation.





## Shaping the laws of a nation

Before introducing a private Member's bill in the House or making changes to proposed legislation, Members of Parliament turn to the specialized team of lawyers, translators, jurilinguists and publications officers in the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel for their expertise. Wendy Gordon and Valérie Boudreau were among the 16 specialists on the Legislative Services team who prepared 720 private Member's bills and drafted more than 6,500 proposed amendments to government bills in the 42nd Parliament alone.



# International and Interparliamentary Activities

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Whether welcoming visiting parliamentarians and dignitaries to the House of Commons or participating in delegations to foreign legislatures and international conferences, Members play an active role in parliamentary diplomacy. Through meetings and courtesy calls, the Speakers of the Senate and House of Commons meet with foreign dignitaries and members of the diplomatic community.

[Learn more about how Members represent Canada to the world](#)

## Opportunities for parliamentary diplomacy can take various forms:



Visits by heads of state or government



Visits by parliamentary delegations



Official delegations led by the Speaker



Participation in conferences as hosts or attendees



Activities here and abroad in which members of various associations take part

## Snapshot of parliamentary diplomacy activities



### AMERICAS (22 ACTIVITIES)

16th Plenary Assembly and 48th Meeting of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas  
Canadian Section of ParlAmericas (CPAM)  
Asuncion, Paraguay

72nd Annual Meeting of the Council of State Governments - Western Legislative Conference  
Canada-United States InterParliamentary Group (CEUS)  
Big Sky, Montana, United States of America



### EUROPE (23 ACTIVITIES)

Meeting of the Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council (UNIC)  
Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (CANA)  
Lviv, Ukraine

19th Winter Meeting  
Canadian delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (SECO)  
Vienna, Austria



### MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA (6 ACTIVITIES)

Bureau Meeting and 45th Annual Session of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)  
Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie  
Abidjan, Ivory Coast

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference  
Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CCOM)  
Kampala, Uganda



### ASIA AND AUSTRALIA (7 ACTIVITIES)

23rd Bilateral Meeting  
Canada-China Legislative Association (CACN)  
Shanghai, Nanjing, Hong Kong and Macao, China

28th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF)  
Canada-China Legislative Association (CACN) and Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group (CAJP)  
Canberra, Australia

## Parliamentary election observation mission for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly, Kyiv, Ukraine

By invitation of the Ukrainian parliament, Canadian delegates travelled to Kiev to participate in an election observation mission for the 2019 parliamentary election. The mission was a joint undertaking by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, OSCE, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament.





### **Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth, held in Ottawa in January 2020**

From January 6 to 9, 2020, the Parliament of Canada hosted the 25th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) in Ottawa. The conference brought together the Speakers and Presiding Officers of the national parliaments of independent sovereign states of the Commonwealth. Attended by over 180 delegates from 37 countries, the topics discussed at the 25th CSPOC included upholding parliamentary transparency and accountability, supporting effective legislative work, managing issues when displacing chambers and providing inclusiveness to support the changing needs of parliaments.



### **Meeting of the APF Parliamentary Affairs Committee**

The Canadian branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) hosted the APF Parliamentary Affairs Committee meeting in Ottawa from April 24 to 27, 2019.

The role of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee is to examine issues of common interest, the general direction of interparliamentary cooperation, legal issues in the French-speaking world, and the general development of democracy. Over 30 French-speaking parliamentarians were in attendance.

### **NATO Parliamentary Assembly Spring Session 2019, Bratislava, Slovakia**

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association participated in the 2019 Spring Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) in Bratislava, Slovakia, from May 31 to June 3, 2019. Organized by the Parliament of Slovakia and chaired by the President of the NATO PA, Ms. Madeleine Moon (United Kingdom), the spring session welcomed parliamentarians, specialists and observers from NATO member states as well as from countries in North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.



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# Highlights from the Hill



## Welcoming a New Parliament

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Preparing to welcome a new Parliament is a huge undertaking involving the efforts of many teams from across the House Administration. The work begins well before an election is called and continues through the first sitting of the new Parliament and beyond.

Much of the effort centres on the **Members' Orientation Program**, which aims to ensure that Members receive the administrative and procedural support and services they need before, during and after a general election.

While generally associated with onboarding activities for newly elected Members, the Program also provides transition services to departing Members, both those who did not seek re-election and those who were not re-elected.



In the foreground, a transition officer takes a call from a departing Member and, in the background, various partners work together to help Members close their offices.

## Overview of the Members' Orientation Program

In 2019, the Members' Orientation Program was completely renewed, with service excellence and innovation at the forefront.

### SUPPORT FOR NEW MEMBERS

#### Members' Orientation Centre

Created to assist new Members with various matters, from obtaining a parking pass to setting up IT equipment and Internet connections.

#### Committee orientation session

Members learn about the inner workings of committees.

#### Chamber orientation session

This session provides Members with an overview of the events that take place when the House is sitting by describing a typical sitting day and explaining the rules of decorum in the Chamber.

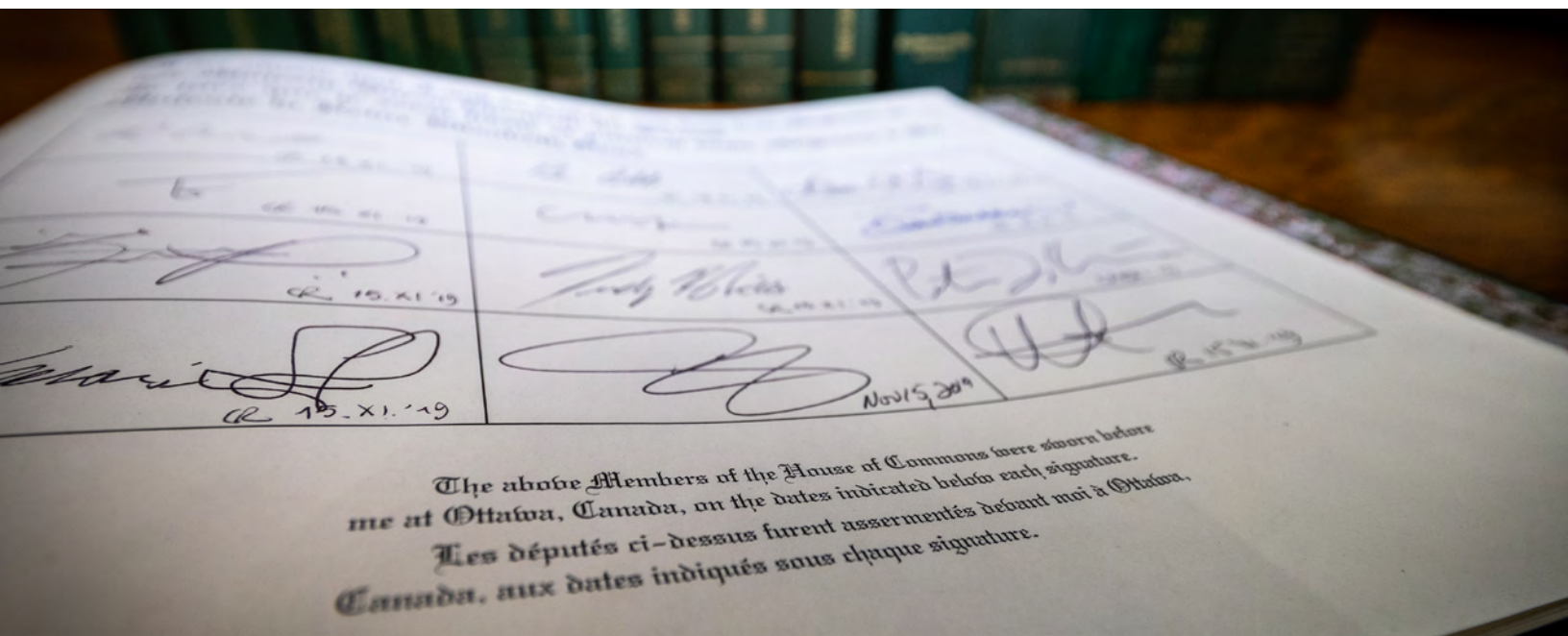
#### Ongoing support

Members and their staff continue to have access to a variety of resources and support throughout their mandate.

## Swearing-in ceremony

Before taking their seats in the House, duly elected Members must take an oath or make a solemn affirmation of allegiance, whereby they pledge to conduct themselves in the best interests of the country. The oath or solemn affirmation serves to remind Members of the obligations and responsibilities they are assuming.

See [Swearing-in process](#) for more information





## **The 43rd Parliament begins**

Hundreds of House Administration employees supported the transition from the 42nd to the 43rd Parliament through the Members' Orientation Program, which welcomed in 98 newly elected Members, welcomed back another 240, and assisted an additional 93 who were transitioning out of public life. Antony Ganchev, a senior cybersecurity analyst, worked in the Orientation Centre alongside other operational experts to provide Members with just-in-time information, 12 hours a day, 5 days a week following the October 2019 general election.

## New logistics for the opening of Parliament and the Speech from the Throne

On December 5, 2019, Members of Parliament gathered in the House of Commons following a proclamation by the Governor General, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.Q., C.D., designating that day for the opening of Parliament. In keeping with tradition, the House proceeded to the Senate, where Members were asked to return after electing a Speaker. Later that day, after electing their Speaker, Members returned to the Senate Chamber for the reading by the Governor General of the Speech from the Throne, a document that outlines the government's agenda for the new parliamentary session.

Maintaining the tradition of these ceremonies posed a new logistical challenge, as this was the first opening of Parliament since the House of Commons and Senate were relocated to separate buildings. Instead of the usual procession through Centre Block, a small delegation of Members, House Administration officials and the Mace travelled on shuttle buses operated by Hill transportation services to and from the Senate of Canada Building, located some 700 metres away, in what was originally Ottawa's central train station.



## Election of the Speaker of the House

On the opening day of the 43rd Parliament, the Members elected the Honourable Anthony Rota as the House's 37th Speaker. Speaker Rota, who was first elected as the Member of Parliament for Nipissing—Timiskaming in 2004, was already familiar with the duties of the Chair, having served as Assistant Deputy Speaker and Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole in the 42nd Parliament.

Since 2015, the Speaker of the House of Commons has been elected using a preferential secret ballot system, making Speaker Rota's election the second time this method of selection was used.



[Watch a video and learn more about the election of the Speaker and the preferential ballot system](#)



The newly elected Speaker of the House of Commons is “dragged” to the Chair by the leaders of both the government and the official opposition. This tradition dates back to 13th-century England, when the Speaker was tasked with communicating the House's opinion to the king, often making the role an unenviable one.

# Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

After the COVID-19 epidemic was declared a global pandemic, the House responded swiftly in efforts to protect Members, their staff and employees of the House Administration, while ensuring that required services for Members would continue to be provided.

March 11, 2020

The Joint Interparliamentary Council issued a news release ordering a moratorium on all international travel and incoming delegations.

March 16, 2020

House Administration employees were advised to work from home unless otherwise instructed by their manager.

March 13, 2020

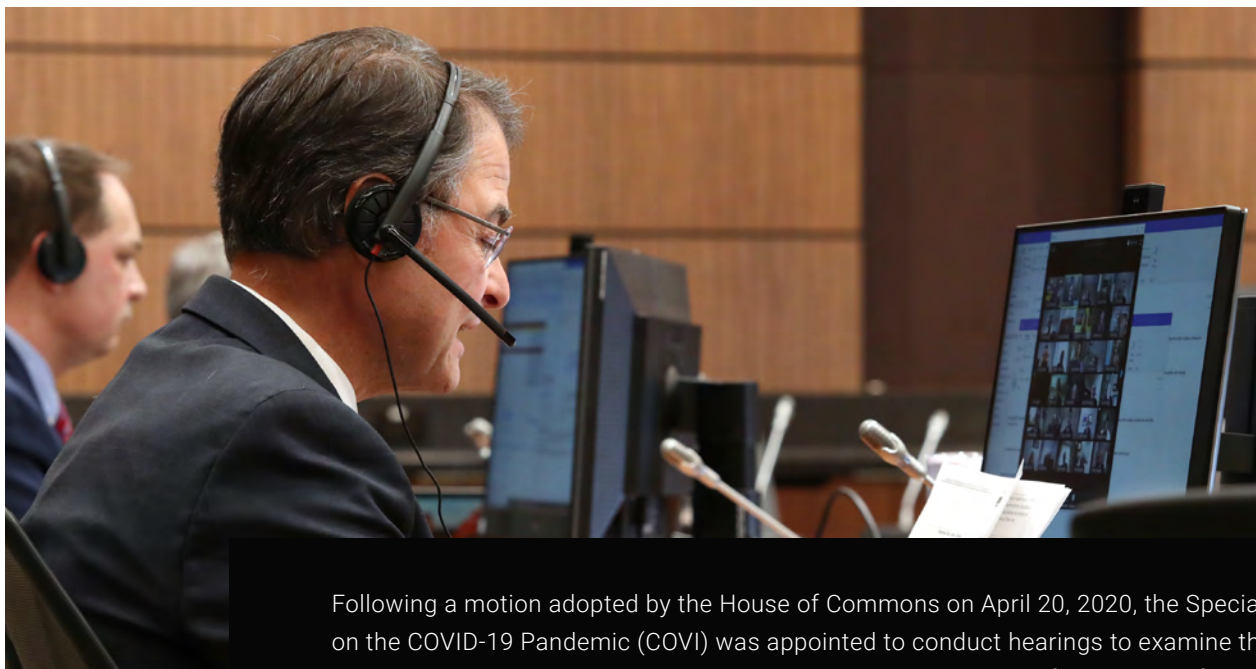
The House modified its sitting calendar by unanimous consent to stand adjourned until April 20, 2020. The Board of Internal Economy issued a statement on the preventative measures taking effect the following day to restrict visitor access to the House of Commons precinct, cancel public tours, suspend committee travel, and cancel all parliamentary functions and events in the precinct.

March 22, 2020

At the request of the government, the Speaker recalled the House to sit on March 24 (see [Response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Chamber](#)), marking the first time since 1992 that the House was recalled.



[Read more about House recalls during adjournment](#)



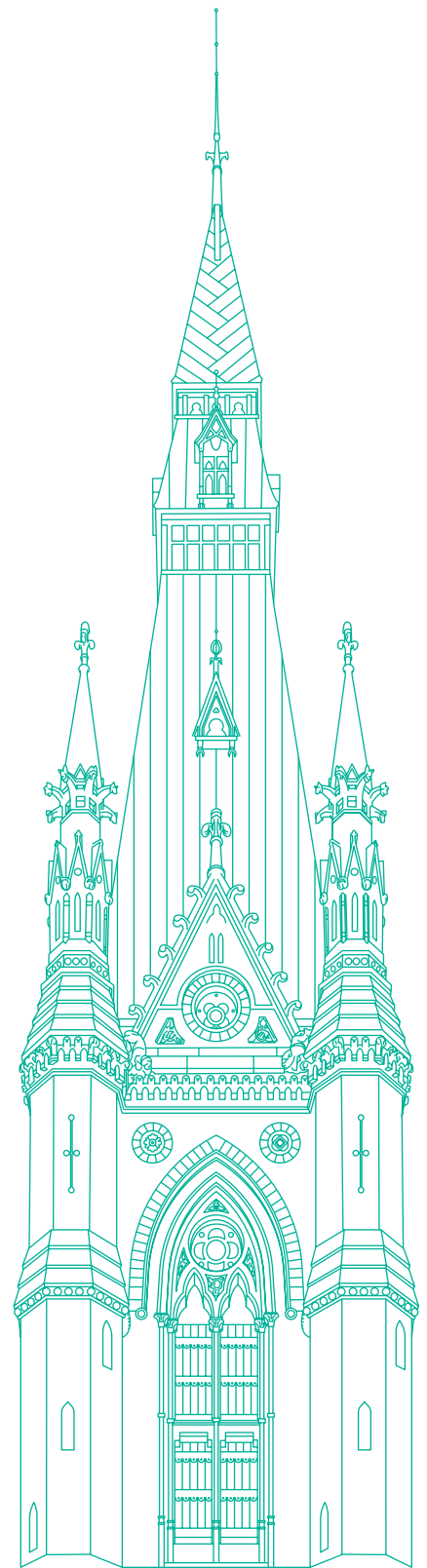
Following a motion adopted by the House of Commons on April 20, 2020, the Special Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic (COVI) was appointed to conduct hearings to examine the government response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All Members of the House of Commons are members of the Special Committee and the Speaker is the Chair. Here, the Speaker participates in a dry-run session in preparation for a hybrid (both in-person and virtual) meeting of COVI.



During this time, the House Administration's focus remained on providing continued support to Members in a rapidly evolving situation while also ensuring a safe and healthy workplace. Decisions were taken following public health recommendations to modify service delivery. Significant resources were dedicated to supporting online work and collaboration as well as new service offerings, including virtual committee meetings.

[See virtual committee meetings at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada](#)

Although considerable efforts were made to minimize the number of employees required to report to work, many employees were still on site to ensure that required services in the Parliamentary Precinct could continue safely and effectively. Protective measures were put in place, including enhanced cleaning protocols, additional hand-sanitizing stations, and the installation of signage on public health recommendations. The Administration regularly liaised with external health and security agencies and other parliaments to ensure the application of current best practices. Timely communications with Members, their staff and Administration employees were prioritized throughout the evolving situation.





## **At the forefront of health and safety**

People like Lise Grandmont are the House of Commons' first line of defence against the COVID-19 pandemic. She and other members of the maintenance and material handling team have been on site, cleaning and disinfecting high-touch areas more frequently and complementing efforts to offer face masks and boost the number of hand-sanitizing stations in the precinct. Their efforts ensured that Members, their staff, and essential Administration employees could physically work in the Chamber and on site as necessary, while also staying safe.

# A New Strategic Plan for the House of Commons Administration

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In May 2019, the Administration launched its new *Strategic Plan 2019–2022*, which set out the corporate priorities and strategic direction for the following three years. It serves to guide decisions and focus resources so that the House Administration is best able to respond and adapt to Members' needs.

## OUR VISION

We deliver outstanding services to Members of Parliament and their employees in support of parliamentary democracy.

## OUR MISSION

We support the parliamentary work of Members by anticipating their needs and delivering streamlined, personalized, and quality services.

[Learn more about our priorities](#)



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## Mandate of the House of Commons Administration

Employees of the House Administration strive to provide Members with the services, infrastructure and advice they need to carry out their work as legislators and representatives in the Chamber, in committees, in caucus and in their offices both on Parliament Hill and in their constituencies.

[See House Administration for more information](#)



**“ The success of a strategic plan depends on people’s ability to see themselves within it, and to understand their role and contribution. ”**

Charles Robert, Clerk of the House of Commons



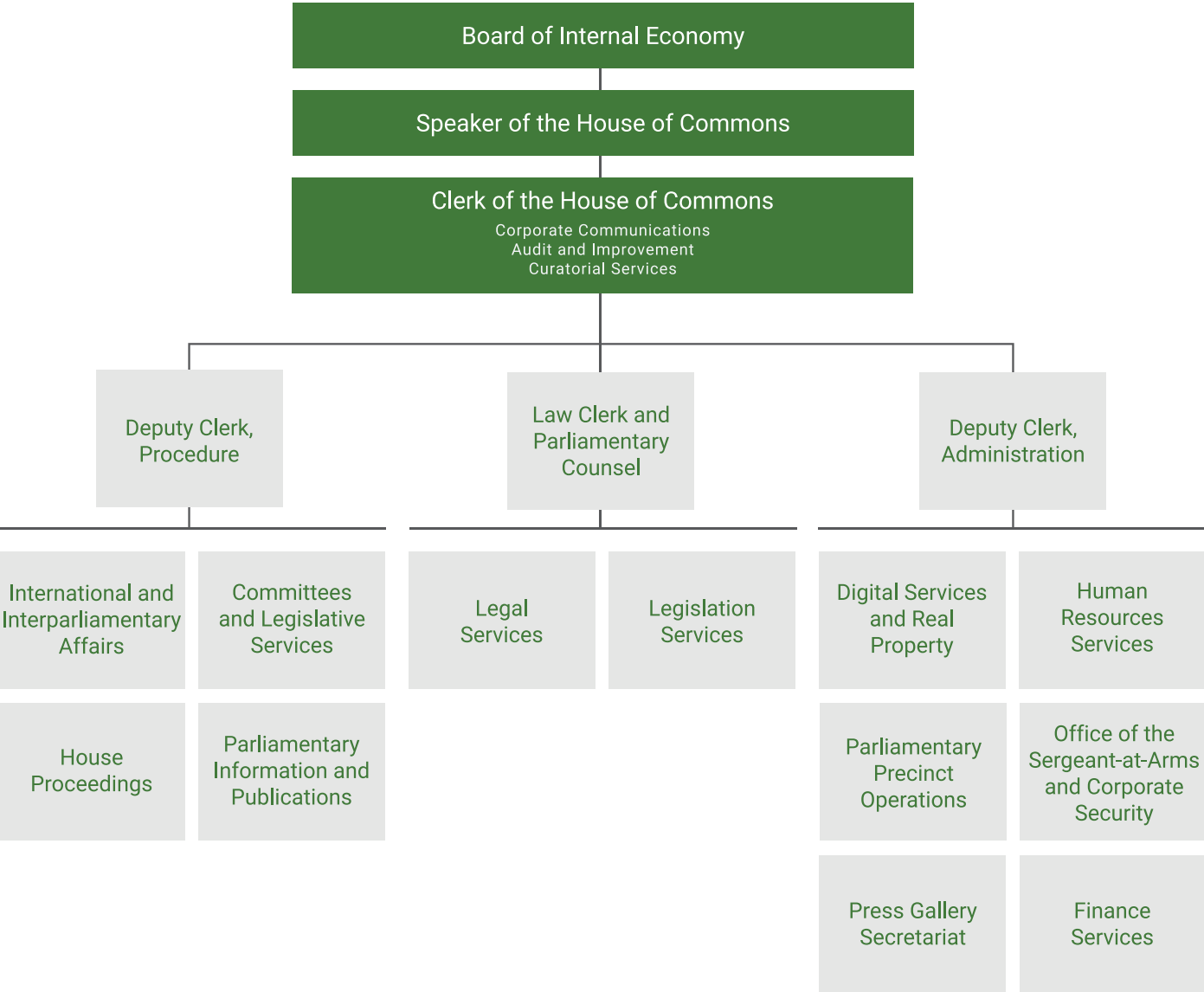
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## **House of Commons Administration**



# Our Organization

The House of Commons Administration proudly supports the institution of Parliament and its Members. It strives to provide the services, infrastructure and advice that Members need to carry out their work as legislators and as representatives in the Chamber, in committees, in caucus, and in their offices on Parliament Hill and in their constituencies.



\* See [Appendix A](#) for more details.



## **A House that gives back**

The House Administration raised more than \$100,000 for registered Canadian charities in 2019 as part of its annual Workplace Charitable Campaign. Employees made donations and participated in fundraising activities organized by dozens of volunteers like Osman Romero, pictured here holding this year's fundraising calendar featuring elements of the renovated West Block.



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## Reporting on Results



# The House Administration's Priorities

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The *Strategic Plan 2019–2022* outlines four key priorities. These serve as our corporate roadmap and guide our collective efforts to work as one House to deliver outstanding services to Members.



## Improved client experience and operational excellence

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The Administration strives to be a leader in service excellence in support of the parliamentary work of Members of Parliament and their staff—on the Hill, in their constituency offices, and abroad.



## Unified and seamless services

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The Administration offers a wide range of services to Members and their staff to support them in various roles. Over the next three years, we will simplify access to services to facilitate their work.



## Empowered and engaged workforce

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We employ a dedicated and professional workforce. Our goal is to empower and motivate our employees to deliver outstanding services. To do that, we foster a culture of innovation and creativity that engages employees with diverse skills at all levels. This helps generate new ideas on ways to better serve Members and their staff.



## Modernized physical spaces and associated services

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The Parliamentary Precinct is the seat of our democracy and is the setting for much of the work of Members and their staff. The multi-decade rehabilitation program currently underway in partnership with Public Services and Procurement Canada provides an opportunity to restore and modernize the physical and digital workspace to continue to meet the needs of parliamentarians.

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## Board of Internal Economy

The Board of Internal Economy, the governing body of the House of Commons – ensures that progress against the Strategic Plan is communicated through the annual *Report to Canadians*.

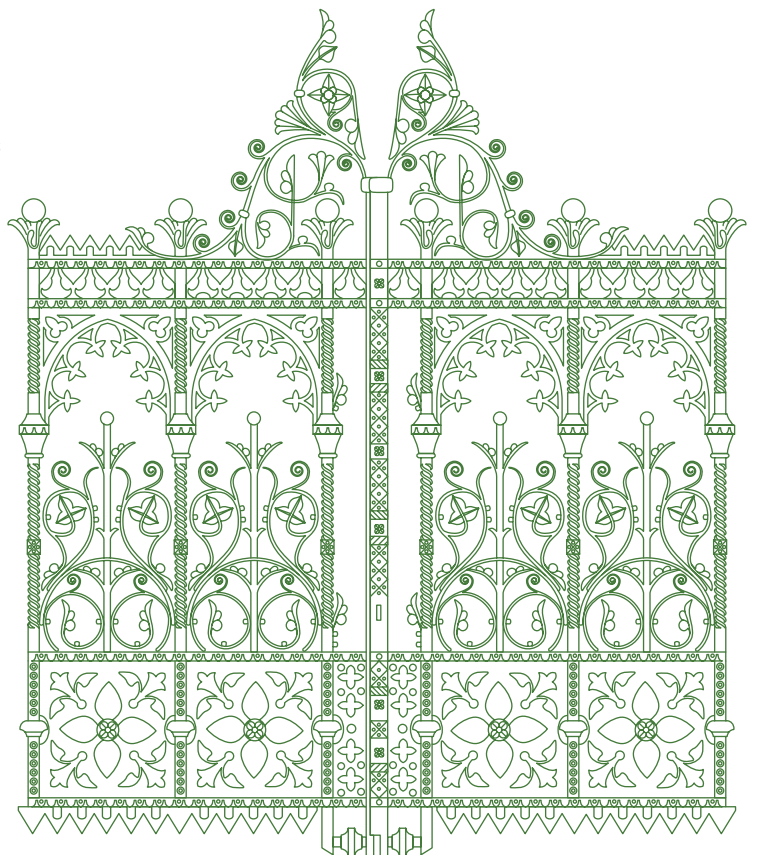


## 2019–2020 Results Highlights

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Over the course of the 2019–2020 fiscal year, with our new priorities in mind and our mission to support the parliamentary work of Members by anticipating their needs and delivering streamlined, personalized, quality services, we realized significant accomplishments in several areas.

- A renewed Members' Orientation Program
- Enabling public participation
- Supporting Members in their constituencies
- Supporting Members as employers
- Valuing our workforce
- Ensuring a safe and secure environment
- Preserving and modernizing our buildings and physical spaces



# A Renewed Members' Orientation Program

In preparation for the 2019 general election, the Members' Orientation Program was revamped to make it more streamlined and client-focused.

Following the election, 13 experienced employees served as liaison officers, providing personalized guidance to the 98 new Members.

Members were immediately given access to the improved web portal, *Source*, an intranet site that provides centralized access to the services that the House Administration provides, including resources for the Members' onboarding and professional development. The online training component tailored to new and returning Members and their staff offers just-in-time, flexible and integrated content designed to support them throughout their time at the House.

At the Members' Orientation Centre, new Members had the opportunity to participate in small group sessions and

one-on-one meetings designed to introduce them to their new work environment and assist them in setting up their office. Similarly, a team of transition officers worked with the 49 Members who were not re-elected, assisting them in closing their offices and transitioning back to private life.

New Members were also invited to a procedural orientation session in the Chamber just before the opening of Parliament, as well as to a series of ongoing training opportunities for them and their staff.

Before the opening of Parliament, the Parliamentary Press Gallery was invited to a briefing session on key procedural matters, including the election of the Speaker and the Members' Orientation Program.

The success of the Program relies on the efforts of hundreds of House Administration employees and is a testament to the House's commitment to providing outstanding services to Members.



# Enabling Public Participation

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## Webcasting of committee meetings

In response to increased requests for televised committee meetings and to ensure that the important work of committees is as accessible as possible to all Canadians, previously audio-only committee rooms have been upgraded to be webcast-ready. The first venue opened to webcasted committees in January 2020, with two others following in February and March. Video committee proceedings help increase public awareness of committee activities, improve accessibility (video broadcasts can be closed-captioned), and enable Members to better share the content of public committee meetings with their constituents and stakeholders via social media.

## Enhancements to the paper petitions system

Since the opening of the new Parliament, paper petitions presented in the House of Commons are now published on the petitions website alongside electronic petitions. The *Standing Orders of the House of Commons* were modified to permit the electronic tabling of government responses to petitions. Upon tabling, government responses are published on the petitions website, providing immediate access to this information for both Members and the public.



## **Critical systems support for a connected Parliament**

A team of IT specialists, including Raymond Pilon, worked with House colleagues after the COVID-19 pandemic was declared to ensure that parliamentary business continued. Their technical support helped committee proceedings move to an online platform, and their earlier support of technological enhancements to constituency offices allowed Members more options for staying digitally connected with constituents.

# Supporting Members in their Constituencies

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## Constituency Office Lease Services

In 2019, the House Administration established a program offering guidance related to commercial leases and constituency office tenancy to support Members in managing over 400 constituency office leases across the country.

The Constituency Office Lease Services program offers Members specialized leasing advice covering negotiations, property and location, first-level lease review, and risk identification and resolution. The program also coordinates with various service areas across the House Administration for the provision of services to constituency offices, from connectivity and computer equipment to office moves and security assessments.

The program also worked with landlords following the 2019 general election to manage the new assignment clauses in constituency office leases. These clauses allow newly elected Members to take over the fully furnished and equipped offices of former Members as soon as they become available, where in the past, newly elected Members often had to find new offices following the election. As a result of the new clauses and the support provided by the lease services team, 58 of 67 newly elected Members were able to move into the offices previously occupied by the outgoing Member in their riding, resulting in fewer office moves and allowing new Members to establish their services to constituents more quickly following the general election.

## Digital office solution for Members

In November 2018, the Board of Internal Economy approved the implementation of a standardized approach to the delivery and management of computer and printing devices in Members' constituency offices. This large-scale life-cycling project aimed to replace outdated equipment in Members' constituency offices while enhancing IT service delivery to enable Members to work more securely and efficiently. In the past, newly elected Members would inherit the equipment of the previous Member in that riding, which meant that the quality varied significantly across constituencies. The 2019 election was an opportunity to accelerate this project and see all Members begin the new Parliament with the same standard of devices in their constituency offices. It was also an opportunity to launch a new digital office solution to Members built on the latest business productivity software to provide secure and enhanced communication capabilities through instant messaging and web conferencing.

The digital office solution gives Members and their staff the ability to collaborate and work more effectively on parliamentary business and constituency office files from anywhere, not just in their ridings or in Ottawa. These improvements, combined with a new intranet connection, aim to provide Members with a seamless IT user experience between their constituency and Parliament Hill.

Newly elected Members were onboarded directly to the digital office, while returning Members transitioned to the new solution at a pace that respected their individual office and information needs.



## Communicating with constituents

Communicating with constituents is an important element of Members' parliamentary functions, and a variety of methods are available to help them do so. One method that has long been used by Members is the distribution of householders and constituency mail (formerly known as ten-percenters).

As part of its ongoing commitment to ensure excellence in the delivery of products and services to Members, the House Administration undertook to modernize householders in 2017 by updating publishing processes and offering new formats. The modernization efforts continued this past year with the ten-percenters, now known as constituency mail. Market research and analysis were performed to provide Members with the latest publishing trends and maximize the production capacity. New formats in line with those of the modernized householder have resulted in a more appealing product.

These changes aim to provide greater flexibility, enhance clarity and reduce the administrative burden for Members, thereby positively impacting the way in which Members represent their constituents.

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**Householders** are printed materials sent by Members to inform their constituents about parliamentary issues and activities. Householders are prepared and distributed exclusively by the House Administration and costs are charged to its central budget. Members can print and mail up to four householders per calendar year.

**Constituency mail** is printed or photocopied material produced and distributed exclusively by the House Administration to households in a Member's constituency. Members may request to print and mail up to eight times the number of households in their constituency per calendar year as a charge against the central budget.

# Supporting Members as Employers

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## Human resources services to Members

On February 28, 2019, the Board of Internal Economy approved the enhancement of human resources (HR) services designed to support Members in their role as employers. These changes included consolidating an HR advisory team exclusively available to Members. This HR team acts as a primary point of access for Members, providing services spanning the entire employee life cycle, including advice and support for the following:

- employee relations (topics include performance management, workplace issues, employee departures);
- tools and programs (e.g. generic job descriptions, templates for workplace structures);
- training and coaching;
- health and safety (including disability management and accommodation requests);
- dissolution and post-election activities, and management of the associated impacts on employees; and
- staffing activities.

The team also provides orientation to Members and their staff to support them during their onboarding.

Services are tailored to the needs of Members and their staff and intended to complement the internal structures and processes for managing resources already in place within recognized parties.

We are committed to working with Members to adapt these services as required to ensure that they are well supported in their role as employers and thereby better able to focus on their work as parliamentarians.





# Valuing our Workforce

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## Top Employer

The House Administration has been selected, for the second consecutive year, as one of Canada's Top 100 Employers for 2020. This designation—awarded as part of a competition that recognizes employers who offer exceptional places to work—is a testament to our commitment to developing policies and programs that engage and retain our people and that attract the most talented and innovative employees.

## Employee Engagement Survey

The launch of the Employee Engagement Survey Corporate Working Group is the latest step taken by the Administration to build on the positive results of the 2018 Employee Engagement Survey. Together, group members are responsible for identifying opportunities to better foster a culture in which our employees are empowered to provide the best and most innovative services to Members of Parliament, based on the employee feedback collected as part of the survey.



## Workplace Inclusion Program

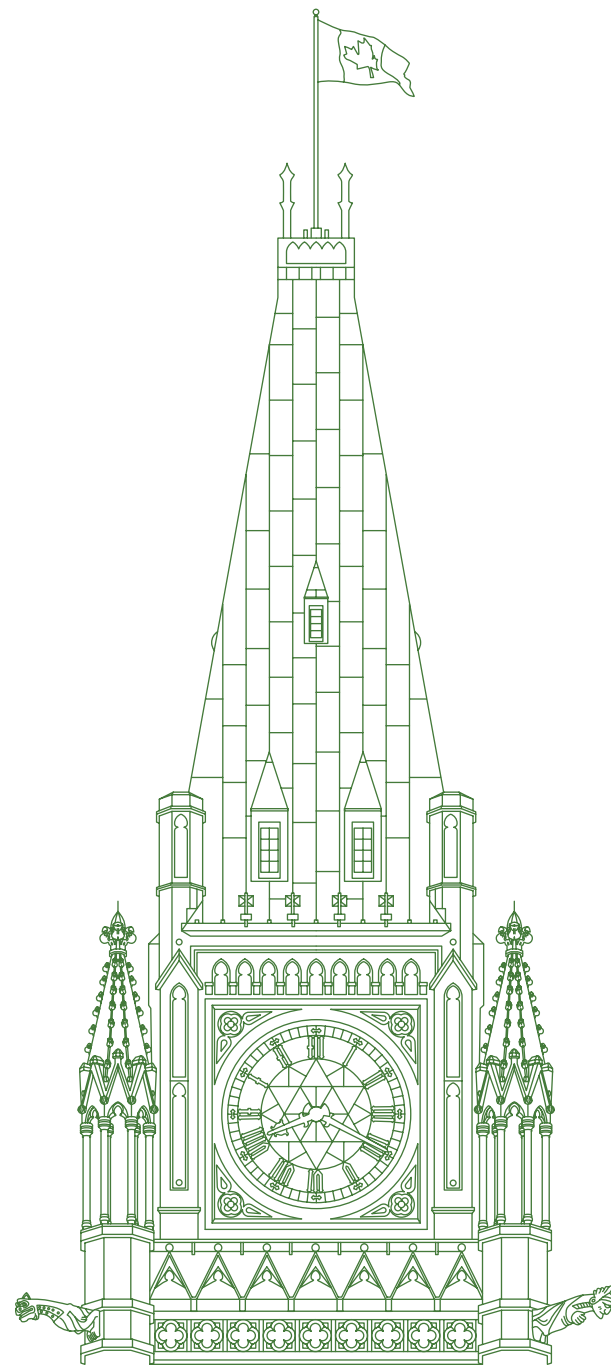
The House of Commons is committed to an inclusive workplace that ensures full and equal access to employment, development and advancement opportunities for current and future employees. To achieve this, a Workplace Inclusion Program has been developed, aimed at ensuring progressive and ongoing awareness and education activities while efforts are made to evaluate our current state of inclusion and identify opportunities for improvement.

The program also called for the creation of a Diversity Council, made up of employees from all service areas and all levels of the House Administration. This group of committed employees have a genuine interest in diversity and inclusion and are motivated to work together to support these values across the organization.

In the past year, the Workplace Inclusion Program and the Diversity Council coordinated events open to all Parliament Hill employees marking National Indigenous History Month, Black History Month, and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, as well as a panel discussion on the occasion of International Women's Day.

## Development of apprenticeship programs for specialized trades

A need was identified to develop and execute a sourcing strategy to ensure that our organization has access to qualified pools of talent in specific areas of trade services, and an apprenticeship program for specialized trades was established. Not only has the program led to an overall increase in employee morale, it supports the transfer of knowledge, the sharing of techniques (both old and new) and succession planning. The organization currently has apprenticeships in place in the four following trade shops: upholstery, refinishing, cabinet making, and locksmithing.





## **A lasting legacy**

Four walnut wood benches adorned with intricate carvings of maple leaf medallions were placed in the foyer of the House of Commons as part of a series of enhancements to the recently restored West Block, home to the interim Chamber. This year, Jean-Sébastien Hotte and his Trades group colleagues, together with Curatorial Services and in-house designers, worked to marry function with architectural style and heritage in putting the finishing touches on West Block, enriching and enlivening this setting for the business of the House.



# Ensuring a Safe and Secure Environment

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## **Building a security culture**

The House Administration provides practical advice and encourages employees, Members of Parliament and their staff to take ownership of their safety to ensure a safe and secure workplace. Several reference tools and online modules were produced this year and disseminated as part of the onboarding of new employees. Topics include emergency preparedness, fire safety, and the safeguarding of information and assets.

The House supports the establishment of a security culture by providing personalized sessions on a range of topics in response to Members' needs. These sessions are delivered either in person or through self-paced virtual training.

Security training and awareness services are also available to Members in their constituencies to help them understand emergency procedures and best practices in order to optimize their safety and that of their staff.

## **Modernization of identity management processes**

The processes by which we provide accreditation and credential management for online and on-site access for Members and their staff were streamlined. This made it possible to roll out the new digital office solution to both newly elected and returning Members, and will enable many efficiencies in the future.

# Preserving and Modernizing our Buildings and Physical Spaces



Mr. Bart Hanna Kappianaq, an Igloolik-based sculptor, was selected to create this important sculpture. His work, titled “Sedna,” was unveiled on April 8, 2019, and is on display in West Block until it can be installed in the Parliament Building.

## Preserving the House of Commons’ heritage

Over 5,000 works of art—including official portraits, historical paintings, ceremonial objects and pieces of furniture—form the House of Commons Heritage Collection. Each object was chosen for its aesthetic value and importance in the history and traditions of Parliament. They are symbolic of Canada’s momentous events and individuals. For example, as part of the celebrations surrounding the 150th anniversary of Confederation and to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Nunavut as a territory, the House of Commons, with the support of Public Services and Procurement Canada, commissioned a new sculpture for the House of Commons Chamber foyer.

Items from the Heritage Collection that were not designated for West Block when the Chamber was relocated from Centre Block were moved into a new, state-of-the-art storage facility. For the first time in the collection’s history, there is now a purpose-built vault to ensure the safekeeping of unused heritage objects.



[Watch this video showcasing the latest addition to the House of Commons’ extensive collection of treasured works of art, artefacts and architectural sculptures.](#)

## Starting the rehabilitation of Centre Block

Following the relocation of the Chamber to West Block last year, work has now begun on the large-scale rehabilitation of Centre Block, a project that will span at least a decade. As the seat of parliamentary democracy, the Centre Block building not only represents a significant piece of Canada’s past, but it will also be a meaningful part of its future history as the workplace of Members of Parliament for generations to come. A governance model that includes a working group of Members of Parliament from all recognized parties was approved to provide strategic direction, support decision making, resolve issues, and share information.

## Upgrading the Parliamentary Television Network

The television service has been converted from analog to digital in all House of Commons and Library of Parliament buildings, resulting in improved signal quality and higher-definition images. The television service in Senate buildings is currently receiving the same upgrades, with the four remaining buildings scheduled for completion in 2020.

# Financial Information

## PLANNED VERSUS ACTUAL SPENDING (IN THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

	Main Estimates	Supplementary Estimates and Adjustments	Total Authorities	Actual Spending	Surplus / (Deficit)
<b>Statutory</b>					
Members and House Officers	112,139	(1,883)	110,255	110,255	-
Employee Benefit Plans	41,418	(1,764)	39,654	39,654	-
<b>Total statutory</b>	<b>153,557</b>	<b>(3,647)</b>	<b>149,910</b>	<b>149,910</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Non-statutory</b>					
Members and House Officers	164,471	8,338	172,808	161,570	11,239
Committees, Parliamentary Associations and Parliamentary Exchanges	7,715	-	7,715	3,476	4,239
<i>House Administration Program</i> House Administration	177,627	9,013	186,639	190,793	(4,154)
<b>Total non-statutory</b>	<b>349,812</b>	<b>17,350</b>	<b>367,163</b>	<b>355,839</b>	<b>11,324</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>503,369</b>	<b>13,703</b>	<b>517,073</b>	<b>505,749</b>	<b>11,324</b>

## HOUSE ADMINISTRATION ACTUAL SPENDING

	Actual Spending <sup>1</sup> (In Thousands of Dollars)	FTE Budget <sup>2</sup>
Office of the Clerk	5,557	45
Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel	4,812	32
Procedural Services	29,416	325
Office of the Deputy Clerk, Administration	3,874	33
Parliamentary Precinct Operations	31,625	491
Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms and Corporate Security	6,924	59
Digital Services and Real Property	85,163	448
Human Resources Services	24,473	153
Finance Services	21,447	202
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>213 292</b>	<b>1 787</b>

1 Salary (including Employee Benefit Plans) and operating expenditures

2 Budgeted number of permanent full-time equivalent (FTE) employees

# Appendix A – House Administration

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## **BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

The Board of Internal Economy (BOIE) is the governing body of the House of Commons. Under the *Parliament of Canada Act*, the Board has the legal authority to “act on all financial and administrative matters respecting (a) the House of Commons, its premises, its services and its staff; and (b) the members of the House of Commons.”

## **SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

As the Chair of the Board of Internal Economy, the Speaker is the head of the House Administration and responsible for its overall direction and management.

## **CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

The Clerk of the House of Commons is the chief executive of the House Administration and is responsible for the day-to-day management of its operations. The Clerk is at the service of all Members and must act with impartiality and discretion. The Clerk also authenticates all decisions made by the House, maintains records of proceedings, and advises on the interpretation of parliamentary rules, precedents and practices.

In addition, the Clerk oversees the following functions:

### **CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS**

The Corporate Communications team provides the BOIE, the offices of the Speaker and the Clerk, and the House Administration with strategic and centralized advice, analysis, products, tools and support related to strategic communications, branding, crisis communications, social media and media relations.

### **AUDIT AND IMPROVEMENT**

The Audit and Improvement directorate assists the organization in the delivery of its mission by undertaking assurance and advisory activities intended to add value to the organization’s governance, risk management, and control processes, and to continually improve processes and services to Members.

### **CURATORIAL SERVICES**

Curatorial Services provides advice to the institution on heritage matters and is responsible for its collection, which is composed of 5,000 objects, including official portraits, historical paintings and other works of art, as well as ceremonial objects and pieces of furniture. The Peace Tower Carillon also falls under its purview.

## LAW CLERK AND PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

As the chief legal officer of the House of Commons, the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel provides legal and legislative services to the Speaker, the BOIE, Members, committees, the Clerk and the House Administration.



### LEGAL SERVICES

Legal Services offers comprehensive legal advice and services to the House as an institution, to the Speaker, to the BOIE, to Members, to committees, and to the House Administration. Legal advisors specialize in multiple areas of law, including parliamentary law, constitutional law, labour law, and contract law. As well, this team may intervene in legal proceedings on behalf of the House of Commons and its Members to ensure that their parliamentary privileges and immunities are protected.

### LEGISLATION SERVICES

Legislation Services assists Members in drafting private Member's bills and motions to amend government bills. This service is also responsible for printing government bills and private Member's bills as they progress through the legislative process. It ensures that bills are correctly printed or reprinted with amendments as approved by the House or its committees and when ultimately adopted as acts of Parliament.





## PROCEDURAL SERVICES

Procedural Services offers a broad range of procedural and legislative advice to the Speaker, Members and Officers of the House of Commons. Procedural Services also conducts research, offers training on parliamentary practice and procedure, and coordinates Members' participation in international and interparliamentary activities. This service area produces timely and accurate parliamentary information in both official languages, such as the transcripts of debates in the House and the minutes of committee meetings.

### COMMITTEES AND LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The Committees and Legislative Services Directorate provides procedural and administrative support to all standing, special, legislative and joint committees of the House of Commons. The Directorate is also responsible for providing procedural advice to the Speaker and Members with respect to legislation.

### HOUSE PROCEEDINGS

The House Proceedings Directorate is responsible for supporting the business of the Chamber, including producing parliamentary publications, managing the Page Program and coordinating Private Members' Business. It provides research, advice and information regarding parliamentary procedure.

### INTERNATIONAL AND INTERPARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

The International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate (IIA), a joint directorate of the Senate and the House of Commons, coordinates the Parliament of Canada's external relations and activities. IIA supports both Speakers' exchanges with their counterparts; the activities of parliamentary associations and recognized interparliamentary groups, in Canada and abroad; official visits by dignitaries and heads of state; and conferences hosted by the Parliament of Canada.

### PARLIAMENTARY INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS

Parliamentary Information and Publications is responsible for coordinating and supporting Procedural Services' information technology activities; implementing strategies to effectively manage its information assets; producing a record of the debates, proceedings and evidence of the House and its committees; ensuring the analytical indexing of key House and committee publications; and overseeing the strategic direction for the dissemination of digital content.

## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Office of the Deputy Clerk, Administration, provides Members with a broad range of administrative services, infrastructure, support and advice to help them carry out their parliamentary functions on the Hill and in constituencies. It oversees the functionality and service delivery of several service areas—namely Digital Services and Real Property, the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms and Corporate Security, Finance Services, Human Resources Services, and Parliamentary Precinct Operations—and ensures their unified plan and vision. It also provides services that support strategic planning and reporting activities, the technical and administrative infrastructure for Canada’s Parliamentary Press Gallery, and oversight of corporate human resources and financial systems management.

### OFFICE OF THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS AND CORPORATE SECURITY

The Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms and Corporate Security is responsible for ensuring security on the floor of the House of Commons Chamber, conducting investigations, coordinating visitor and event access, ensuring security awareness, and administering parking services. It also develops and implements House-wide administrative security policies, standards, and processes aimed at preventing, detecting and responding to security risks and threats.

### PARLIAMENTARY PRECINCT OPERATIONS

Parliamentary Precinct Operations provides efficient and modern operational support to ensure a functional work environment for Members and the House Administration. This includes areas such as trades, tenant operations, room allocations, catering and restaurants, postal and messenger services, transportation, printing and mailing, as well as maintenance and material handling.

### DIGITAL SERVICES AND REAL PROPERTY

Digital Services and Real Property delivers modern, secure and cost-effective products, workspaces and services where and as needed by Members, the House of Commons Administration and partners.

### FINANCE SERVICES

Finance Services delivers advisory and operational support to Members and their staff, as well as to the Administration, in the areas of policy and financial planning, financial management, and materiel and contract management.

### HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES

Human Resources Services offers a range of services and support to Members and their staff, as well as to the Administration, in the areas of talent management, employee relations, pay and benefits, occupational health and safety, and organizational effectiveness.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA