

The Veterans Affairs issue continued to draw hostile media and public reaction this past week, but in spite of many calls for Minister Fantino to resign, the consensus is that he is still a valuable connection between the Conservatives and Toronto's Italian community, which is said to be the reason he hasn't joined a number of others under the bus. The actions of the government's lawyers are pouring fuel on the fire as they argue against the certification of a class action suit by vets in BC Supreme Court. One of their key arguments is that the pledge of support for Canada's military personnel from Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden during WW I doesn't carry the weight of legislation...that it was just politics and therefore doesn't count. That's not going over too well. Nor is word that managers in the Veterans Affairs ministry have been given bonuses for eliminating staff, many of whom had been providing front-line services (see 'In Case You Missed It').

The NDP has been attacking the Conservatives over what appears to be PM Harper's plan to sell the assets of the old Canadian Wheat Board to an American company. 'Sell' may actually not be the word...more like 'give away'. For some reason the federal government saw fit to turn down an offer from a group of Canadian farmers who were willing to pay over \$250 million and privatize the CWB. For a prairie-based party, the Conservatives have been challenging their relationship with farmers of late. In addition to the Wheat Board issue, Conservatives have given even more power and control to American seed suppliers to call the shots in dealings with farmers. Ralph Goodale reports that government crop testing has become haphazard and unreliable, thus harming Canada's reputation for producing high quality grains. Plus, it appears that the Tories have taken measures that will allow the railways to get away with poorer service to move grain.

As we enter this week, troubles with Liberal nomination races (one of them a big event here in BC) are drawing media coverage and criticisms from Tory pundits on the talk shows. Trouble for the Conservatives continues to come in the form of dropping oil prices and their impact on the economy and government revenue.

Almost lost in all of the other traffic are the government's changes to the gun laws, something the Liberals will not support.

Our messages to the public:

Liberals oppose Conservative gun bill

Liberals cannot support a new gun bill that puts Canadians' safety at risk.

First, Bill C-42 would take the power to classify firearms out of the hands of the police - the experts in keeping Canadians safe - and put it in the hands of politicians like Stephen Harper.

Second, it eliminates the need for owners of prohibited and restricted firearms to have transportation authorization to carry those guns in their vehicles. This means they could freely transport handguns or automatic weapons anywhere within their province, whether to a grocery store or a soccer field.

We will not bring back a gun registry, but we do need smart and well-crafted gun control legislation. In its current form, Bill C-42 is neither; instead, it makes Canadians less safe. We cannot and will not support it.

Liberals support several elements in Bill C-42, such as the provisions streamlining licencing paperwork, tightening safety training requirements, and making it harder for people convicted of domestic offences to obtain a gun. We are calling on the government to split Bill C-42 in order to help expedite these acceptable measures through Parliament.

Please view the latest Liberal Party [shareable](#) on the Conservatives' risky gun bill.

Please view and share Justin Trudeau's [statement](#) on Bill C-42.

Items of interest from the news and the party:

-Schisms in the South Asian community are creating tensions in the hotly-contested nomination for Surrey-Newton:

<http://thelinkpaper.ca/?p=42922>

-Justin Trudeau's pledge for 'open nominations' has become a sticky issue on a number of points, with some suggesting that damages to the party's chances will result. The race for the Orléans nomination in Ottawa is one example:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/messy-nomination-battle-could-hinder-liberal-prospects-in-ottawa-riding/article21987208/>

-More pointed criticism continues on the government's treatment of veterans, with Julian Fantino cast as 'helpless' and PM Harper tagged as the one calling the shot. Rick Mercer nailed the issue just over a year ago:

<http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/gerry-caplan/2014/12/harper-government-finally-wins-gold-medal-lying-to-veterans>

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/ralph-goodale/fantino-veterans_b_6290600.html

<http://youtu.be/R79U0PGpxDM>

-With some big unions now calling for 'strategic voting' to defeat Conservatives, the Prime Minister has all of a sudden become concerned about third party spending on election campaigns:

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/12/07/stephen-harper-third-party-spending-election_n_6284732.html?utm_hp_ref=mostpopular&ir=Canada+Politics

-While many of the above topics fall short of the 'bread and butter' issues that average Canadians care about, federal cutbacks may be creating a threat that they will care about -- the safety of our food:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/union-sounds-alarm-over-food-safety-program/article18120315/#dashboard/follows/TAMASYN>

These are just some of the items in the news...much more can be found on our Seniors Commission Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bclibs/> If you do not have access, please e-mail me for an invitation to this group.

Looking ahead:

Justin Trudeau will join Joyce Murray as headliners at a big fundraising event on December 15th at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver. You can book your tickets here:

<http://events.liberal.ca/Event/an-evening-with-joyce-murray-and-justin-trudeau-in-vancouver.aspx?Lang=en>

Some of our SLCBC executive will be volunteering at the big Surrey-Newton nomination meeting this Saturday, December 13th.